

SCENE & HEARD
AND THE MOMENT OF ENCHANTMENT



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Summary

This thesis is an aesthetic, social and social-aesthetic investigation of events organised by the organization Scene & Heard in Somers Town, London. Scene & Heard is a mentoring project that partners children (9-14) from culturally complex, and comparatively deprived backgrounds with volunteer professional theatre workers. The organization utilizes the immediacy of theatrical events to give the children a public experience of personal success to boost their self-esteem and raise their aspirations. This thesis looks at the aesthetic components and social agents that come into play in the leading up to, and coming about of the events. It further investigates the effect this work has on all parties involved; the children, the volunteers and the audience members. The findings are filtered through pragmatically chosen theoretical concepts by Erica Fischer-Lichte, Richard Schechner, Victor Turner, Willmar Sauter and Darren O'Donnell in search for the Moment of Enchantment.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a tribute to the imagination of the children of Somers Town, who create weird and wonderful worlds that through Scene & Heard we grown ups are allowed to be part of. It's not possible to do these worlds full justice on paper, but I hope the reader will get an idea of the dimensions.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE ORGANIZATION S&H - SHORT VERSION

History

Scene & Heard, from here on called S&H, is an organization running a mentoring project for children in Somers town, North London. S&H is modelled on the organization The 52nd Street Project that has been in operation in Hells Kitchen, NYC since 1981. Kate Coleman founded S&H together with Sophie Boyack in 1999 after she had worked with The 52nd Street Project whilst living in NYC in 1998.

Today

S&H celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2009 and Co – Funding Director Kate Coleman left the organization, as did Administrator at the time Simma Gerhenson. About to enter it's 12th year the organization sees the other Co – Funding Director, Sophie Boyack on her way out, leaving Artistic Director Roz Paul and new Administrator Jasmine Rowe to steer the ship. Simma Gerhenson has just been appointed Head of Development and will return to the organization shortly. On a European level, a second organization modelled on the American original has only just started in Amsterdam.

Mission

In their own words, on their web site the “fundamental purpose of the project is to boost the self-esteem of the children involved by giving them a public platform for their voices and by providing a personal experience of success.”

(http://sceneandheard.org/about_ouraims.html 20.04.10) Just like The 52 Street Project, S&H is based in a troubled area of the city and therefore the participating children come from comparatively more deprived backgrounds than a lot of other London kids. To help fulfil their mission S&H is dependant on the theatre workers

that fuel the organization – 400 volunteers have given and are prepared to continue to give their time up for this project.

Activity

S&H currently ideally run 5 playwriting and acting courses annually for children aged 9-14, although economy sometimes doesn't allow all of them to happen. The courses have a natural progression through four levels that culminate in the so far final course *One-on-One* where the kids get to perform together with a professional actor a two-hander that a professional writer has written for them. A fifth course has been piloted but so far has, due to lack of funding, only been done once.

Funding

S&H is a privately funded charity and offer their services to the children of Somers Town for free. The end performances are also free of charge to the public although they rattle with buckets at the door after each show. Because S&H do not pay their actors and theatre professionals the Arts Council have, so far, not supported their work, and the organization is in constant search of new revenue to able them to keep their courses running. Individual and corporate donations from trusts as well as their own fundraising activity have kept them running through the years, but lack of some form of core funding makes it a constant battle that some times mean they have to cancel a course.

This thesis is written on the basis of fieldwork done on the first of the four courses *Playmaking One*.

CHAPTER TWO: INTRODUCTION

It is my hypothesis that the work done by S&H ‘works’; that it does what it says in their mission statement, and that it also has an effect on all the other people involved as well, and to use a word from one of my main concepts; it is *efficacious* (Schechner, 2008). I have set out to find out in what way it is so, in other words to capture some of the effects that the activities of this organization have on the lives of some of the parties involved. In order to do so I followed the introductory *Playmaking One* course that ran summer term 2009, and that ended in the production *Jumping For Joy - the Uplifting Plays!*, here after called *Jumping for Joy* at the theatre Teatro Technis the first weekend of July 2009. Using that as my base to create a ground on which to test my hypothesis I will start by describing it - the phenomenon itself, the course and the preparatory phase as well as the performances. As a further means of investigation I have chosen to concentrate on two theoretical concepts; Erica Fischer Lichte’s *autopoietic feedback loop* (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 40-43) and Richard Schechner’s *efficacy - entertainment braid* (Schechner, 2008, p. 129-136). These concepts indicate my two-pointed interest in this wide-ranging work; on the one hand it lies within the events themselves, the performances as artistic manifestations of myriads of factors interwoven and culminated into those few hours of togetherness in the theatre. On the other hand it lies within the effects the events have on the people at any time involved and, or present. The theories, rather different in their technical terms and expression, essentially, for my money, represent two sides of a coin. Fischer-Lichte, through her detailed and patient investigations, technical knowledge, and analytical bravery offer theoretical accounts of performances from a tradition that has been in operation throughout last century gone, as well as continues it’s conquests in the new millennium (both the tradition and Fischer-Lichte). With her roots in the German *Theaterwissenschaft* tradition Fischer-Lichte never loses sight of the art; her ground to investigate is always within the Western theatre and performance tradition, a tradition wherein I too plant my feet and wish to stay put. Still her interest, as the title of her latest book suggests, lies within the effect the art has - this is where the crux of the matter lies; *The Transformative Power of Performance, A New Aesthetics* (Fischer-Lichte, 2008) and it is, in this thesis, where the two theories meet. Richard

Schechner operates on a much wider ground within the American *Performance Studies* tradition that he himself is the godfather of. Whilst including social and cultural performances in a broader sense and finding inspiration and models of explanation in cultures much further from his own, he too is fundamentally interested in the effect the phenomenon he is looking at has on the various participants involved. The two theories have come to inform the way I perceive S&H's work and there is, as a consequence, a dialectic relationship between the theories I have chosen and my development of method. I have chosen the theories I have because they've suggested possible models to describe and understand the phenomenon I am focusing on, and I have developed methods that I expect will uncover material that will support the theories that I have chosen, and who knows maybe even shed some new light on them. The two theories as such represent the two sidedness of this project: Fischer-Lichte's feedback loop is a model on which the events will be investigated and described and Schechner's efficacy-entertainment model will inform factors I will be looking for whilst uncovering the effects, such as results, audience belief and the creation of a community through collective creativity. Fischer-Lichte's feedback loop is as well in a Meta perspective an epigraph for the project as a symbol of the unity between social and aesthetic values, as well as a way of picturing this dialectic relationship between chosen theory and method.

As the work progressed, other theoretical concepts have come into play, and have as well contributed to the total picture. Through Schechner, Victor Turner made his entry and his theories of rituals grew in importance and contributed strongly towards a conclusion. Willam Sauter and his concept, and book by the same name; *eventness* (2006) became a supportive tool through it's acknowledgement and investigation of the specificity of the theatrical. It offered a different angle, a different visual and theoretical account of the phenomenon. On a smaller scale so did *Social Acupuncture* (2006) by Darren O'Donnell and *Relational Aesthetics* (2002) by Nicolas Bourriaud.

As the theories above suggest this thesis falls under a theatre research field that is aesthetic, social and social-aesthetic. Although there is teaching involved, it does not focus on the pedagogy as such, even though aspects of the teaching method it will be introduced. The organization makes a point out of not being within the educational system so their work does not belong to TIE. The performances are based on scripts

and follow given structures, and do not belong to a devised theatre discipline either. Approaching the work as community theatre could have been a justifiable angle, but in my opinion S&H is far too aesthetically product-orientated, so it wouldn't do them full justice either. S&H are, like community theatre, process orientated, but the process they are aiming at, for the children, is dependent on the product they create. Therefore this thesis as a research project is a rendezvous of the social and the aesthetic, and the social-aesthetic that naturally follows, in an acknowledgement of the relations and the art that occur in that 'space'. To support the primary theories the thesis at times also makes use of secondary theories from the fields of social anthropology and psychology.

I will not debate whether or not the writings of children can or should be regarded as art. Professional artists produced *Jumping for Joy* and as such I will regard it as a professional theatre production. This inclusive, communal approach is done in the perceived spirit of both Schechner and Fischer-Lichte, and will serve as a value guideline in my work. Schechner will be the inspiration on the wide lens of community investigation, as his work naturally lends itself that way through its anthropological roots. In the more specifically framed artistic performance perspective I will draw more on Fischer-Lichte, as her theory, although also fundamentally anthropologically based in semiotics, is comparatively more artistically detailed, and as pointed out above focuses on components strictly devised with the theatre-performance world in mind.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH, REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

I have pragmatically chosen methods to gather material for this case study because there was no ready-made method that was suitable to what I wanted to investigate. Pragmatic as such doesn't indicate an easygoing attitude lacking in methodological interest, quite the contrary – a 'one way to go' formula would have been both helpful and welcome, and was at times sorely missed. Pragmatic rather means that I have hand picked (or brain picked) theories and methods to shed light on the work done by S&H; it is therefore the practice of the organization that has dictated the direction this thesis has taken theoretically and methodologically. It's hopefully not wishful thinking to assume that it will become clear to the reader why the individual theories and methods have been chosen, and even why, at the base of it all, the main research strategy is auto ethnographic.

I have to the level possible used participant observation and thus myself as an empiric barometer to filter and describe, in phenomenological terms the aesthetic components. I have further hermeneutically analyzed the social processes and different agents that have come into play throughout the fieldwork. Through face to face interviews I have gathered slices of inter subjective worlds from the lives of some of the participants in this particular *Playmaking One* course, as well as from participants in the production *Jumping For Joy*, in an attempt to sketch out the many faceted inter-relational map of social and artistic events that took place. Through interviews with participants I have accessed some of the social reality construction that followed for a few participants on an individual level, as well as compared the individual narratives with expressions of a collective experience both specifically in relation to last summers events, but also on a more general level within the organization's activities, through people who have been part of this work for many years. I have of course in my fieldwork been predisposed by everything that constitutes me; among many other things being white, middle classed, female of Norwegian origin, with a professional and personal love of

theatre, and in the second half of finishing a master degree.¹ Another important factor is that I had previously worked with S&H as an actor in a *Playmaking One* project in 2005, as well as seen several shows as a member of audience, and as such came at it from a familiar angle. In my experience this has only given me a good will, and openness from the inside I otherwise might have had to work harder to achieve. It also gave me an advance first hand insight to the aesthetics of the organization and the challenges the artists come across, which made the interviews and conversations with them smooth, and I believe mutually enjoyable. The flip side of such an advantage; the danger of loosing the freshness with which I perceived and recorded everything, and thus my critical sense of what was going on, was a perspective I bore at the forefront of my mind throughout. I followed the course *Playmaking One* that started on Wednesday the 22nd of April and ran 7 consecutive Wednesday evenings with a half term gap, as well as a writing weekend, 2 rehearsal weeks and finally 3 evening and 1 afternoon show. I missed two Wednesday evenings due to obligations in Oslo, but was otherwise present in most of the activities related to the organization over the whole period.

Qualitative research

I used a traditional qualitative research method in my interviews, which I draw experience from through periods of work in the field of marked research, something that was going to prove helpful in some ways, and not so helpful in other ways. I used the book *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju* by S. Kvale (1997) as a supportive tool to confirm commonalities, and or detect discrepancies between the general corporate market research and academic research, such as ethical guidelines on with who, how and where to set up the interview, level of spontaneity in an interview situation and transcription issues, but still there were a few things difficult to foresee. Corporate research, in my experience is mainly interested in quantitative scales form 1-10 constructed to find out how they can obtain market intelligence in order to draw

¹ This love has developed through years of training and work as a professional actor, that I still uphold parallel to my studies. Years ago I started my career in Norway, and am at the moment based in Oslo, but I have also lived and worked in England for almost 10 years. As a result, I approach this material on a theoretical level with my feet firmly planted in a practical discipline.

conclusions on how they can earn more money. Alternatively it runs qualitative research with people in executive positions mainly to prove points and run hidden self-promoting marketing strategies, disguised as research, in order to position a brand in the market. Basically it's all about business and establishing ways to generate revenue and solve practical matters. On the other hand academic research, like this thesis, has no underlying market strategy, but is looking to collect empiric data, produce knowledge and investigate intentions up against actual findings and experiences drawn during fieldwork, in an attempt to say something new about the phenomenon in question. In other words it's nature is theoretical and its product an increased stock of ideas. My background in the commercial field caught up with me not so much in the one-to-one interviews; the actual interview situation was home base for me. But the audience questionnaires brought on some challenges, as will be revealed below. Of practical reasons all the fieldwork took place rather early in the process, and in hindsight it's clear to me that I was fumbling around - not blind, but with rather thick glasses on. I knew what I wanted to find out, but struggled to formulate the questions that would get me there.

Another challenging area was recruiting parents. I knew that finding parents who were willing and able to talk to me was going to be one of the possible difficulties, so when Milly Sanderson, mother of play writer Barry (9) and David (16), and also member of the board of S&H turned up it was like a gift. Milly was more than happy to talk to me, and not only that - she had a great track record and extensive experience with the organization. We decided to meet in Somers Town the week after the events. However Swine Flue was rife in London, and when I called to confirm our meeting a day in advance, David was in bed chewing his *Tamiflu*, so we decided to leave it for a week. When I called back a second time Milly herself was flat out, and by now my time in London was running out. I didn't want to miss the chance to talk to her, and didn't think I had an option of finding an equally good replacement, so I had to pull in a favor. Ronin Corporation, the market research company in London that I've worked for on several occasions have phone-recording devices, and were kind enough to let me use their facilities. Speaking on the phone as opposed to face-to-face changed the premises on which the research happened, and deprived the conversation of possible facial - and physical expression-based interpretations that could have led us in other directions. But something was better than nothing, and better yet without the risk of

bringing a pandemic to Norway. In hindsight I don't think it altered the conversation too much; although Milly was a bit poorly, she was generous and really wanting to contribute.

A second change of plans also happened last minute and was also due to health issues although not directly involving my informant. Kate Coleman had been my point of contact from day one in my project and had promised to give me an interview in my final days before leaving for Oslo. It was deliberately timed that way in order for me to have finished as much as possible of my fieldwork in case anything came up that I wanted to ask her about. Due to sudden and serious illness in the family though Kate understandably had to pull out. Thankfully her colleague Sophie Boyack was kind enough to save the day on very short notice. Sophie stepped in and I got my Founding Directors interview a couple of days before I left. Although the idea of starting S&H came from Kate, Sophie has been her partner in London since the word 'go', and knows all the stories, trials and tribulations just as well as Kate does and again I didn't feel that anything was compromised.

A last little hic up from me personally, more embarrassing than academically problematic happened during the performance weekend and had the potential to make an interviewee a touch hostile. I was very happy to have met Galal, who I believed to be the mother of child play-writer Zahin (9). She had kindly agreed to do an interview with me and I was ever so pleased about having found a second willing parent. Galal was 26, and a would-have-been very young mum to Zahin, however it was not on my agenda to comment on, or have any opinions about that. I possibly should have I realised afterwards; the interview started like this:

S: Can you give me your name, just for the record?

G: My name is Galal Lahin

S: And you are the mother of...

G: No, the sister of Zahin Lahin

(Interview Galal, S&H office, Teatro Technis, post show 03.07.09)

Embarrassed and apologetic I collected myself and was ever so happy that Galal laughed it away and seemed to forgive me immediately. Galal turned out to be a very communicative family member of one of the children, and I can't help thinking that

although I hadn't sought a sister intentionally it might have been a stroke of luck due to her belonging to a more outspoken, younger generation, and still she was well above minimum age for an interview without written parental consent.²

Finally the last challenge has been in the transcribing phase simply based on quantity. Less thick glasses at the time of fieldwork would have made life easier and is definitely an experience to draw on next time; five and a half hours of interview transcribed verbatim was more work than anticipated. In hindsight some of the material seem 'unnecessary' simply because a fair deal of it was material already experienced by myself, covering familiar ground. In an unforeseen way though this material took on the function to confirm my receiving apparatus as a representative member of the collective; it strengthen the empirical material in a way that was encouraging to the writing. All the informants were highly inspirational, and due to the heightening factor of the recording device, they probably gave more thorough thought to the matters in question than what would have been the case otherwise. As such the qualitative interviews carry traces of the collective experience in a way that has been a constant source of inspiration and confirmation. The most articulated volunteer was also the one with the far most experience; Giles Taylor's voice has put a strong mark on this thesis, as will become clear throughout. There are others again who generously gave their time up, but that haven't made their way in, which of course is no reflection on them, rather a reflection of the initial width of the research and a later need to narrow things down.

A certain kind of actor with a certain kind of story....

Several of my informants among volunteers, as well as others, pointed out that it takes a certain kind of theatre worker to be involved with S&H, implicating altruism:

² She had her parents consent orally, her mother stood beside us when we made the appointment for the interview, so I saw no reason to collect a written one, she was after all 26 and it could have been perceived condescending if I had.

“The actors are second to none, the actors are absolutely brilliant and there are absolutely no egos involved throughout the course – throughout the plays; it’s not about the actors or the writers or the directors it’s about the children and for me that’s what comes across on the night. (Interview Shelly Silas, in her kitchen, Brixton, afternoon 08.07.09)

It might then go without saying that that certain kind of theatre worker also made life in the field easier for me through being someone inclined to help, and thus easy to ask for interviews. On a second reflection though also possibly someone who could confuse or at least diffused matters slightly as well. All the volunteers were informed from day one that I had an extra agenda with my presence, and everybody reacted with an amazing willingness to contribute in any way, shape or form. Part of this could be placed on actors’ general pleasure in talking about themselves and their work, but part of it also belongs to these particular actors’ love of everything that constitutes S&H – a matter I will return to in the section *Smug and Worthy?* (See later this chapter.) Either way it brought on a readiness to talk, which was of great benefit to my work. A tiny observation in hindsight though makes me aware that a lot of the stories, a lot of the reflections that were conveyed through the interviews as well as during more informal chats (see Hope and Anchor described below) were somehow ready-made; they were stories that had been told before, thoughts that had been shared time and time again and possibly therefore could suffer from being a bit dusty, rusty or as suggested above; a bit diluted. This doesn’t make them less valid or true at all, but it was difficult as a researcher to uncover new ground and to find new angles, make people think thoughts they hadn’t thought before - not only for my personal research satisfaction of genius discovery, but for the sake of looking at the material with new eyes and through that bring up the possibility of giving something back, something for the organization to take notice of for their future development. Ready thoughts and traveling stories however are like clichés based on something fundamental in their origin, and most of my findings are confirmations of, and congratulations to an extremely well functioning, and well thought – and worked through organization. That said we did of course also due to the nature of the project witness the creation of new ground before our eyes, new plays and with them we did generate some new stories to tell in years to come.

...in a certain kind of pub

When it comes to the gathering of stories - what in my introduction I've called social reality construction amongst the volunteers mostly happens in the Hope and Anchor Pub on Crowndale Road just up from Teatro Technis across the road from Goodwin & Crowndale Community Hall where the classes take place. It's a run down local pub with cheap drinks, a suitably rude landlord and local characters. It's been the watering hole for S&H ever since they moved in to Teatro Technis and the clientele are used to these sudden turnouts of a slightly more posh collective of artistes. It's where the classes are summed up, worries are shared and stories are told. Official interviews - prepared, recorded and later transcribed were done where it was most suitable for the person, and the location was mostly dictated by what was available at the time; the front room of Teatro Technis, S&H's office, a bench in the park, the canteen at the BBC, but the amount of informally gathered thoughts over a pint in this pub should not be underestimated.

The interviews

The interviews were recorded straight onto my portable Macbook and conducted on the basis of prepared interview guides (see Appendix). Looking back at the interview transcripts versus the interview guides they never follow the intended order of questions. The transcripts I believe convey a naturally flowing conversation about a subject close to the heart of both parties. Every interview had it's own path and the informants were chosen because they each offered an individual angle to S&H that was interesting to the project, so it was natural to trust that their telling instinct was important. One question could sometimes lead to a 6-800 word answer that took on a life of it's own covering 4-5 follow up questions that I never needed to ask (this as a perfect example of the readiness to talk I mentioned above). My role as the interviewer was more based on ticking off of subjects from the interview guide before we wrapped, rather than running a hard hitting q&a. The 400 volunteers that are the base on which S&H draw when they're producing a show might belong to a given breed of actors when it comes to work intentions and ethics, but many of them also seem to belong to a well articulated breed, with clear thoughts about what they are

doing and why, hence long sentences and free but valid associations. This verbal ability crossed with the passion a lot of them carry for organization is responsible for the 99 pages of transcribed interviews.

Smug and worthy?

It is also worth mentioning that through many conversations and interviews with the volunteers an awareness of the risk of being perceived smug and worthy shone through. This selflessness that's mentioned above of course also involves a heightened awareness of how things are perceived outside their own little yard. It is in the best kind of way worthy to do charity for children, and some people might perceive doing worthy things as mutually inclusive to being smug. One could argue that 'smug' in this case, if there is such an opinion lurking, is an ignorant perception of what could rather be described as a wider democratic orientation. This orientation amongst many other things involve an awareness to the fact that these children have very few channels in which to exercise their young voices, and that as a volunteer at S&H it is possible to be part of creating such a channel. The organization through their work honor the children by providing them with a safe platform to, within an extended version of their own community, be **seen and heard**; to express through their own words something that's on their minds and in their hearts. In my personal experience this pared with the volunteers' chance to use and further develop their own specialized skills as theatre professionals makes it a kind of charity work that is very unique and ever so much appreciated, as it lays the foundation for 'these particular actors' love of everything that constitutes S&H'. As Sophie Boyack pointed out:

[...] the thing that we give is a meaningful opportunity to volunteer. I mean, you know we could all go and do voluntary - we could stuff envelopes, leaflet for Shelter, [...] actually using your skill and possibly developing your skill is certainly a rare opportunity for actors. (Interview Sophie Boyack, coffee shop on patio outside British Library 22.07.09)

And as some clever unknown author once said: Those who can, do. Those who can more, volunteer.

The audience questionnaires

I also did a written audience questionnaire on the two first nights of performance to get an idea of whom the audience were, why they were there and in written terms get an impression of what effect the show had on them as human beings or at least document some of the evening through their words. As Willmar Sauter in his book *eventness* (2006) points out while investigating the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer from *Warheit und Methode* (1960):

[...] Gadamer underlines the methodological advantage that the spectator has over the player: since the playing is directed toward the audience, only the spectators – rather than the players – are capable of experiencing the wholeness of playing and to understand the whole meaning. [...] The emphasis on the spectator's understanding enables Gadamer to reduce the difference between ritual and theatre. (Sauter, 2006, p. 15.)

Two points are here worth noting for the sake of this thesis, both theoretically and methodically: the 'upgrading' of the audience to the position in a performance situation with the clearest vision acknowledges their impact in a way that, as will be clear later, corresponds with the main theory chosen to investigate the actual events; Erica Fischer-Lichte's feedback loop. As a consequence, as pointed out by Sauter; the material then lends itself with more ease towards Schechner and his theories of rituals and theatre. The importance of the audience participation in S&H's work and the results of the questionnaire will be investigated in more detail later, but on a method and implementation level there were a few points to be mentioned. Administrator at the time Simma made me realise that the wording of one of the questions was impossible to understand for someone who'd not recently studied the works of Schechner and after an initial attempt to rephrase it, I decided to cut it out all together. This was where my background in market research caught up with me; the question was pursuing a simplified numeric answer to the efficacy versus entertainment question that will be presented in detail later. I shamefully confess that it was an attempted short cut, and that methodologically the question was worthy a questionnaire a thesis in the Natural Science (no offence intended) rather than the Humanities.

Kate offered that S&H could print the questionnaires for me and Roz suggested introducing the questionnaire in her welcome speech before the show, all incredibly generous things that were really encouraging to me at this point in the process. Roz's presentation helped a lot in getting responses back. I had intended on getting a large enough number of responses on the first night so that all the answers were based on the same experience, the special opening night. I estimated with 4 shows and an average of 80-90 people (not counting the children) in the audience, that a full opening night would come close to 25% coverage of the total. But in the chain of communication there was a little misunderstanding regarding numbers of questionnaires and I ran out! I should have double-checked but was preoccupied with looking after the kids while the questionnaires were printed and didn't realise that they were less than agreed until it was too late. People came up to me and said that they'd love to contribute, but there were no more sheets and no time to print more either. This led to the fact that of the 97 answers that I have 37 are from the first night and 60 are from the second. One night is never the same to another in the theatre, and the first night is always the most special, and even more so within the work of S&H than in other stage work. The difference will no doubt have had some impact on the answers but there are still some very obvious conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of the material.

In processing the material I have also become aware of another thing that was completely unforeseen, and really puts the numeric outcomes of the questionnaire in some doubt, as it raises some interesting methodological aspects of academic work within a community like this. Of the 97 people that filled in a questionnaire on the 2nd and 3rd of July 63 people were friends or family of a volunteer on the production. 29 people were general audience, which would involve previous volunteers, general friends and fans of the organization, as well as artists there to check out if this was something they might want to get involved with. That leaves only 5 people to be friends or family of a child - indeed, there was only 1 from the opening night! Anyone who was present in at the theatre will know that this is not an accurate picture, and it raises the question why did so few of them fill in the form, and why did I not realise until it was too late? I take full personal responsibility for the latter, realising I was at the time only looking at the total number of sheets, not at all thinking that I should have made at least an attempt of assuring all groups were rightfully represented. In

my head that was going to be self-adjusting, or rather in my head there wasn't even an issue. But the first question needs a bit further attention: Why did so few of the family and friends of the children fill in the form? It's not possible to go back and run another questionnaire to find out, so the following is based on speculations and assumptions: All of the children, without exception in this group came from families with immigrant backgrounds. Based on that it is possible to suggest that some parents and associated members of family might not have understood what was said in the presentation, and further would not have been able to fill in the questions without translation and writing assistance. Or even though they might have understood the meaning of the words Roz said, they might still not have been culturally familiar with the purpose of such research, possibly even thinking that their opinion wouldn't be valued. It is also possible to think that they might have found it a bit intimidating. A last possibility could be that total bafflement due to the nature of the rather overwhelming experience of the events might have made it difficult for them to verbally utter anything about it. Or they simply forgot, or didn't want to answer any questions – all valid excuses. But when referring to the material gathered from the audience it's important to bear in mind that it is over represented by the part of the audience that probably would be classified as white, middle class, higher educated and in many aspects comparatively privileged.

Restrictions – consent – confidentiality

Whilst very happy to assist me in every way they could, S&H would not allow me to video record anything. This due to several child protection rules as well as the amount of professional people involved at any time that would have had to sign release forms in order for me to use the recordings. The shows being one of the main focuses of research it on the one hand was a shame that I couldn't support my own experience through recordings, but on the other hand I was challenged to find alternative ways of documentation, a problem or a blessing that obviously belongs to the heart of theatre and performance studies. I did however use a digital camera to take photographs when I was allowed and it was suitable (not during the actual shows of course), and I did collect release forms to use these photos from both the parents of the children, apart from 1 who's parents never turned up, and all the actors as well as some of the

directors (consents to use photo material of children and consents to use photo material of volunteers is available in a folder on request). It was easy to obtain the permission from the theatre workers, but surprisingly easy also from the parents. I did give them an A4 paper with information on who I was and what I was up to (see Appendix: Information to possible informants) but very few bothered to read it, they seemed happy to sign straight up based on my just orally explaining. This that can be read as a sign of the community feeling that evolves on the night that will be investigated in detail later, involving a sense of mutual trust. The camera allowed me anonymous documentations whilst offering support to my research by its methodically positivistic nature, but also offered a technical challenge due to bad lighting and often very restless motifs. The other very important restriction to always bear in mind when around the children was the sad, but born out of necessity rule of ‘never be alone with a child’ that affects all work with children today.³ This meant that I along with everybody else in the project had to make sure others were in the room or in the proximity when ever talking to or interviewing the children. The names of the children and their family members are changed throughout the thesis. The names of employees and volunteers of the organization are authentic. I have chosen to incorporate pictures of the children as they illustrate so well, and I have the consent, but I have photo shopped any identifiable elements like names on T-shirts.

³ Actors and theatre workers who work with children in the UK whithin for instance TIE are very aware of this code of conduct. Making sure never to be alone with a child is a way of protecting not only the child from misconduct, but also the individual worker and their organisation from any false allegations from the children or their family regarding misconduct. S&H, like most similar organisations, run CRB (Criminal Record Beurau) checks. The CRB is an “Executive agency of the Home Office set up to help organisations make safer recruitment decisions”. (http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/about_crb.aspx 20.04.10)

Performance analysis

I also include in this thesis a ‘performance analysis’. The hyphen indicates that it is an illustration of components highly likely to occur during any S&H performance, rather than an extensive analysis of the components of last summer’s events. It is an analysis of the artistic regime of S&H in general; what constitutes the very specific style that has developed through the years, and which today are trademarks of the S&H shows. This means that the analysis is not specific to *Jumping for Joy* from summer 2009, although examples will be used from that show.

Research – blurry borders

It lies within the nature of auto ethnographic research that personal experience is a flagship in the writing, but at times I must confess to have had doubts about the size of this ship. I chose to volunteer for S&H as part of the research for this thesis and through the research exposed myself to this experience. As a result I have come to think of my research as little events in their own right constituting one greater whole, upholding this inseparable internal feeding of information between me, the event and this thesis, in my own little personal feedback loop. Methodologically I exposed myself to, and as a result was part of creating the events that make up the basis of this thesis, and thematically the writing is therefore inseparable from both me, and the events. This at times almost claustrophobic connection means that some emotionally highly charged experiences will filter through in this paper.

CHAPTER FOUR: *PLAYMAKING ONE* SUMMER 2009

The course

The *Playmaking One* course in the summer term 2009 started on Wednesday the 22nd of April and ran through to the final performance on Sunday the 5th of July. Over 7 Wednesday evenings the children were introduced to some basics of play writing and all of them, apart from one, in the end wrote a play that was performed at Teatro Technis. S&H, like their sister organization The 52nd Street Project, base their teachings on play writer, director and teacher Daniel Judah Sklar's method described in his book *Playmaking, Children Writing & Performing Their Own Plays* (Sklar, 1991). Step by step the children gradually build an understanding of what a character is, a way of creating one, different categories of characters and ways to create conflicts. The system in many ways follows a simplified Aristotelian dramaturgical approach, where a logic and chronological beginning middle and an end is encouraged, although not forced through and not always evident in the final products.

The children

10 children aged 9-11 were picked from 3 local schools: Edith Neville Primary School, Saint Aloysius Infant School and St Mary and St Pancras Primary School. The children were picked by their individual schools on various criteria and then offered a place on the course. The parents in turn gave their consent before the children were finally confirmed participants. Different children would have been picked for different reasons but most of them share a need for an out of school / out of family experience. According to Ben Judge, 6th year teacher and Dave Pritchard, 5th year teacher at Edith Neville Primary School they try to choose children that don't get to go to a lot of other after school clubs and or activities, and as teachers they strive to forget their own doubts that these particular kids for individual reasons might struggle to fulfil the course, it's so much more important that they get a chance.

Also getting them there as well, like I try not to think, although it probably enters your mind a little bit, there are certain children who you know that it probably won't happen; they won't come for the writing weekend, they won't [...]. But you try to overcome them so that if you've got a doubt about that child you've got to kind of pick them and hope that it works out. (Interview Ben Judge and Dave Pritchard, after school, schoolyard Edith Neville Primary School 09.07.09)

Often coming from families with relatively little tradition for sending them to after school activities, and also often without much experience with any theatre tradition, at least not a Western one, it is sometimes difficult to explain what it's all about to the parents. The tactic then is to find someone within the community that can help: "she just had a 2 or 3 minute conversation in Bengali about what her child got from it and all of a sudden things became a lot easier [...] it's word of mouth, it's people talking amongst themselves." (Ibid.) As a means of trying to hold the children to the course they, together with their parent on the first night, sign a contract. This contract is an attempt to bind them and help them fulfil the course and of course also not waste the time of the organization and the volunteers. This is in no way an attempt of trying to force the children to do something they don't want to, they are free to leave at any time. It's more an attempt of making their parents understand that this is a big deal; a demanding steep learning curve for the children that rely on attendance at specific contract given times. And also that it's a massive amount of resources offered to their child, with a big reward at the end when they've stood it through.

The volunteers

Through the course various volunteers partook as classroom assistants, by profession dramaturges, costume designers, writers, actors and directors. The group was quite steady throughout, with a few dropouts due to work or other engagements, some pre planned and some on short notice. The organization always managed, and sometimes on impressively short notice, to replace people so that on every course night there was a minimum of one grown up per child plus the course teacher.

The course teacher

Artistic Director Roz Paul, who also produced *Jumping for Joy*, ran the course. Roz has worked for S&H as course teacher and producer the last 4 years, and as a salaried member of staff for the past 2. The lessons are initially created by Kate and Sophie based on the book mentioned earlier by Daniel Judah Sklar (Sklar, 1991) and adapted by The 52nd Street Project as described by Willy Reale in the book *52 Pick-Up A Practical Guide to Doing Theatre with Children* (Reale, 1994) and of course filtered through Kate's experiences in NY in 1998. Roz has overhauled the courses and puts a personal touch to them based on her own experiences as an actor, classroom assistant, dramaturge, director and now, as she puts it herself, she's in charge of the overall voice, vision and integrity of the organization.

Grown up friends

When saying that the children write during the course it's actually on most occasions not true - literally. Each child, at any one time throughout the course has a grown up ready to do the actual writing for them - a kind of scribe, this is of course unless they really want to do it themselves. This is to avoid a school like approach that could bring in associations to traditional ways of learning and associated possible problems with literacy and negative feelings in that aspect. S&H is not the place for the children to worry about grammar or spelling or handwriting – it's a place to develop their imagination. Besides many children are slow at writing, so due to the measured time of the classes this solution avoids the writing from holding up the creative process, so the children can concentrate on being playful. The assistants are given clear rules and guidelines by S&H on how to write with the children: not to correct spelling or grammar mistakes, how to encourage the children's imagination, how to handle suspected plagiarism and never to influence or correct them in the way they express themselves (Notes on being a Class Volunteer for Playmaking One is available in a folder on request).

The ‘character hegemony’

As a writing tool the children learn to create characters through character profiles that have the following content here exemplified by Nora’s *Strawberry Sundae* a recipe book from her final play *Double Paris*:

Name: *Strawberry Sundae*

Age: *15 years old which is quite old for a recipe book, about 35 in human years.*

Habitat: *Seymour House (a flat) in Churchway in Somers Town.*

Family: *Only a brother who is an instructions leaflet for a bookshelf. Mum and Dad were instructions on how to build a dolls house but they were burnt because the dolls house was built and they were no longer needed.*

Most important being: *Brother.*

Job: *Works in local Sainsbury’s as a checkout girl.*

Biggest want: *Work as a recipe book at a 5 star restaurant in Paris.*

Biggest fear: *Bacterias getting into her recipes.*

These profiles are made as specific as possible, and become sources the children go back to when they are stuck in their writing process; the more detail the more gifts to inspire their writing at a later point. The children learn different kinds of character categories; animal, human, object and object of nature; though in their final play they are not allowed to write human characters. The reason for this is that by freeing themselves from humans they avoid writing about people and things they are familiar with and their imaginations are invited to kick off on a different level. “[...] this emphasis on character as the first stage in dramatic writing comes from Aristotle’s *Poetics*, ” (Sklar, 1994, p. 39).⁴ The first character they create is an animal character based on their favourite animal. The class starts with games that make the children

⁴ This interpretation of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, contrary to the ‘plot over character’ interpretation is representative for an actor-focussed tradition in search of ‘theatrical truth’ that can be drawn from Stanislavski, and has a strong American roots through acting gurus like Lee Strasberg and Sanford Meisner.

think about the characteristics of their chosen species. Sklar points out that animals engage all ages and all kinds of people and acting them out through theatre games is “a wonderful way to overcome self-consciousness.” (Ibid.)



**Strawberry Sundae, a recipe book (Ellie Harley) shares her biggest fear:
bacterias getting into her recipes.**

The genius' biggest want and biggest fear

Needless to say the plots develop from these biggest 2. By defining these 2 character essentials the children lay the foundation for conflict and possibilities for developing plot lines. Through scripts, pre made and performed by the classroom assistants the children get to see plays that are boring and plays that are more exciting and afterwards discuss what made them more or less so. Well into the course they get to practice what they learn by writing ends to already started plays, as well as writing their own full practice play.

The grown ups as Guinea Pigs

The classroom assistants are mostly actors, some directors or writers as well but a lot of them are actors. This means that the course teacher have 10 ready and willing professionals to at any time pick up a script and exemplify what ever the topic of the day is, in order to create a discussion. For instance the same characters in 3 different plays can create a base to discuss which one worked the better and why. One of the challenges in this is to make the children watch as writers, not as general audience members, in other words avoid the discussion being about which of the actors was the better one, and rather talk about what in the writing was it that kept us interested as an audience and why.

CHAPTER FIVE: WRITING WEEKEND

The writing weekend took place at Plot 10 Community Play Project After School And Breakfast Club on the weekend of 12th -14th of June. It was an intense weekend for both children and grown ups involving 9 kids, 9 dramaturges plus course teacher Roz Paul. 9 plays for 18 actors and 9 directors were produced and read before we wrapped on Sunday afternoon.

Meeting the actors

There was an extra buzz in the room at Goodwin & Crowndale Community Hall on the Friday night that marked the beginning of the writing weekend. The kids had had their final class and discussed various types of endings a play can have; happily ever after, sadly ever after, confused for ever after, cliff hanger ever after, resolved – unresolved, all this before finishing off their practice plays. We then sat down in a circle and the children prepared questions for their actors in order to gather information that they could use, if they wanted to, while writing their plays. Also to know what their actors looked like, get a general impression of them, and form a relationship with them. The questions were inspired by the character profile-system and involved things like name, age, family, fears and favourite things. Putting the actors on the spot they also involved ‘Please rate your acting skills on a scale from 1-10’ and ‘How many accents can you do?’ as well as ‘Can you sing and or dance?’. This session is not the time for actors to brag beyond ability – anything claimed could very well turn up in the script. Quite often the character an actor gets given is, in a rather entertaining manner, an expression of a subconscious perception the child has had of the actor, and therefore it’s a revealing and nerve wracking moment for him/her a few days later when the plays are handed over. Assisted by their dramaturges the children went ahead with their questions, each child with 4 professional grown ups at their disposal. There was a wet blanket killing sparks though as it became clear to us that Fiona, a very playful girl who had been an active

and highly contributing part of the group, wasn't going to go through with the writing weekend. It was her birthday on the Sunday and her parents had decided to invite people to a party for her instead. At this point in the process S&H couldn't provide an alternative solution, and since the choice was already made for her we reluctantly had to let her go. 4 people stood behind prepared to give up many hours of their time for her, and with the contract signed 2 months beforehand, with all the dates and times on, we couldn't quite believe what happened. Some parents don't get it and I will come back to that in Chapter Fourteen.

The first writing day

A summery Somers Town met us on Saturday morning for a wake up - warm up in the playground. Familiar favourite games from the course were played to sharpen our senses and prepare us for a long day. In our pairs we brainstormed a long list of possible characters, chose 2 and started working on their background. Names and profiles were created before lunchtime, the work only interrupted by a little tea break. Packed lunches were followed by the highlight of the day: softball that for most of us revealed more enthusiasm than ability, but at least equally cherished by grown-ups and children. T-shirts with the children's names in colourful letters to be worn during the performances were in turn made before the final writing session ended the day. It was a tired and excited gang of dramaturges that saw the children off before gathering at the front room of Teatro Technis to discuss the day, the plays and the children whilst enjoying some grown up beverages with compulsory crisps and biscuits. We read all the plays as far as they'd got, gave feedback, discussed potential staging problems and decided which children were going to get to write a song. 3 plays were picked based on which actors had said they could sing, as well as how far the playwright had come in the process. It was a long meeting that also revealed some of the new dramaturges' fear of guiding too much or too little, and as usual it continued in the pub however this time in The Victoria, on the other side of Mornington Crescent; a more posh pub with a beer garden – we needed a sit down amongst some trees.



Peter getting ready for softball.

The second writing day

The structure of the second day was much like the first. Knowing the children's concentration will weaken throughout the day it's a known fact that the more the dramaturges can squeeze out of them in the morning the better. Tea breaks, packed lunches and revenge for yesterdays softball loosing team was all part of another long day that ended in a collective reading of all the plays, after a marathon computer type-up session. We even had a special guest; one of the boys' actors had not turned up for his interview on the Friday due to performing at the time, but Greg Hicks, a many times volunteer, had still been given the job by promising to answer questions via email and turn up to read his part on the Sunday, and most importantly - meet his playwright Zahin.



Dramaturge Kai Simmons, Zahin and Sulley at Plot 10.

Nora

Only after the last Wednesday class had Roz assigned a dramaturge for each child. All of us had a strong indication though and had been with the child for the last 3-4 classes, some more or less from the beginning. Relationships had developed, and there were no big surprises. I was paired with a lovely girl of French-Nigerian background, we had worked together through several classes and developed trust and a good relationship through fun and work. Nora was a hard working girl, conscientious and kind, mindful and fun, a joy to work with. Other dramaturges had far bigger challenges to cope with than me; concentration problems, cheeky naughtiness, shyness we thought insuperable, but Nora's problem was possibly that she was too diligent. By the time we had finished the play and typed it up Nora had had enough. Her slightly confused and a bit scared behaviour caught the attention of Roz first. She had pulled away and sat by herself on a desk and Roz was trying to ask her what the matter was but without much luck. Then Roz asked her if she wanted to sit on the sofa with me, to which she gave a barely audible 'Yes', and I put my arms around her to help her over. We got there just in time for her body to go rigid. Her

neck twisted to one side and with rapid eye deviation and fluttering eyelids she was gone for several minutes. It was scary. She was exhausted and pale by the time her dad came to pick her up, but the seizure was thankfully over. Nora almost disappeared in the arms of her big dad as he told us that that she is an epileptic, a fact they somehow had forgotten to tell us in advance. We called back the rest of the children who had been sent out to continue the reading, trying our best to calm both them and ourselves.



Nora and I.

The weekend was over: 9 plays were produced by 9 proud playwrights as content and exhausted as the 9 dramaturges that had stood them by, all reined with steady hand by Roz. The only little aspect was little Nora who we all worried about, but a phone call round from Roz later in the evening confirmed that she was fine, but with little or no memory of what had happened during and before the seizure. As volunteers nobody is allowed to form relationships with the children out of the S&H time, no phone calls, no letters, no emails, no Facebook friendship and of course that's the way it has to be - however as a dramaturge at that point I wished I could somehow repair my own guilty fear that I had been too tough in racing her to finish her play.

CHAPTER SIX: REHEARSAL WEEKS

Double Paris

The play writers' job was over and it was time for the other pro's to get working. Actors Ellie Harley and Alan Park along with Director Ellie Jones started their work on *Double Paris* by Nora at a small rehearsal space in Candid Arts Café in Islington. Sitting in on the discussion between the 3 confirmed the level of commitment and seriousness these scripts are treated with; there was nothing to suggest this couldn't have been a play by Ibsen or Pinter. Well, maybe apart from the names of the characters; Strawberry Sundae, a recipe book and Fresh, toe fungus bacteria, names that spark the initial actor's paranoid discussion involving amusing things like "so I came across as toe fungus!" Then the interpretation of the play itself started. As an insider to Nora's work and intentions I restricted myself to overhearing, leaving it to the artistes to interpret lines and actions, solve travelling between locations (London - Paris) whilst layer-by-layer building their characters. By the second rehearsal, director Ellie, who is the Artistic Director of Southwark Playhouse, had been kind enough to provide a rehearsal space at work. The much bigger space came in handy, as the piece was ready to move about on the floor with song and dance. The actors were finding their feet with the characters and the play had started to develop its natural flow, it felt fun and was ready to meet the children.



Director Ellie Jones and Fresh, toe fungus bacteria Alan Park from *Double Paris* by Nora rehearsing at Southwark Playhouse.

The first run

Nerves were strongly present around lunchtime on Saturday 27th of June at the Basil Jellicoe Hall, another community space just around the corner of Teatro Technis. A bunch of actors and directors were getting ready to show the results of the last two weeks of rehearsals to the children. Dramaturges were called in to sit with their respective writer while they saw their piece performed for the first time. No costumes, no props, no lights, and just a tape recorder to play the pre recorded music for the songs. I had slipped away in my lunch break from my own dress rehearsal for a show at The Place, amazingly in London terms just a 10-minute bike ride away. My director had reluctantly let me go, and S&H had been accommodating enough to run '*Double Paris*' first. It was great to see Nora again, give her a hug and see that she was fine and had forgotten all about the trauma 2 weeks before. I had explained to her in advance that I was going to have to run immediately after her play and she was cool, much cooler than me. We sat on the front row watching together. She seemed a bit nervous in the beginning; attentively watching the performance but then towards the end a proud little smile came up on her face followed by a little excited blush in her cheeks that might have had to do with the fact that the Ellie had decided to let the two characters kiss at the end of the final song. The following conversation took place before I left:

- Are you happy?
- Yes
- Are you proud?
- Yes
- So am I, very proud of you. Did you like it?
- Some of it.
- Oh why not all of it?
- Well they forgot the lyrics didn't they!

And true enough they did, some of the lyrics got lost in the song. I explained that that's how actors are; they won't learn their lines until they have to. Then I had to run.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE ARTISTIC REGIME OF S&H

Space

Teatro Technis has had its current location since 1978 and S&H have had their headquarter there for about five years. It is a non-purpose built black box theatre on Crowndale Road in Camden. It's a flexible 120 seater, usually used in a thrust with a simple sound and lighting rig, a tiny tech box, a friendly foyer with a little bar, 2 little sharing dressing rooms, offices and a front room in the building. The seats are folding chairs on rostra. The stage has two doors for entrance and exits on the back wall on top of two doors that allow entrances and exits from the side, stage left where the electrical piano usually is placed during a production, and another one from the corridor among the audience, stage right; diagonally from the corner. It is not a space that has an old style theatrical pathos with proscenium arch, elevated stage and heavy curtains, on the contrary the children from S&H frequently respond to the room with a 'Is this it?' surprise due to the community hall feeling in the theatre. As Zahin said when we had a chat before the final show "Yeah I thought the theatre was going to be a lot bigger. I imagined it a bit like the Albert Hall - but smaller." In the centre of the audience is the 'Play-Writers Chair', the place where the children overlook their own work on stage and from where they come forward to take their bows to raving applause. The chair is just another folding chair but decorated and with a colourful sign. Although the community - rather than grand feel of Teatro Technis is a result of economic necessity, it is at the same time an essential part of creating the unity between stage and audience that I will investigate in more detail later. By chance, during my fieldwork the organization celebrated their 10th anniversary with an evening at The Shaw Theatre next to The British Library on Euston Road. The evening of Sunday the 31st of May 2009 was set-aside for *A Celebration of the Imagination – Ten Years of S&H* (see Appendix for programme) and the crowd came along. The Shaw Theatre is much grander than Teatro Technis and therefore gave a sense of heightened stakes, a more polished version of a S&H night, a taste of what it might be like for the organization to move to a larger space, which through it's

architecture, size and interior gives what by most people would be perceived as a higher status. 10 previous course members aged 11 – 20 revisited and had written new plays. It was structured as a kind of relay-play where one character from the previous play joined in the next and each writer had one character handed down and one to create. The first author was from the very first course they ever had 10 years ago, and she picked up her ‘given character’ from her play back then. It was an exciting evening full of magic moments, but it was rather different from a night at Teatro Technis, and one of the reasons for that was the space. The 450 seater with red, velvet chairs, an elevated proscenium stage in front of a steep auditorium automatically brought out the ‘wow’ factor that Teatro Technis doesn’t, and was packed with all the usual suspects. Plays were played, songs were sung, and tears of joy were shed, and for this special occasion a brand new composed S&H Anthem was introduced *Come on Down to Somers Town* with lyrics by Simon Grover and Music by Rebecca Thorn & Ronnie Parris (lyrics in the program). All the elements were there that usually come together at Teatro Technis too, but somehow it felt very different; the children seemed to disappear in the room. The size and shape of the room, which was part of creating the sense of a special gala evening, was also what took away some of the community feeling and created a ‘them and us’ sense as Sophie Boyack said when I asked her about it. At Teatro Technis everybody can see, hear and smell everybody; actors, children and audience alike, whereas at The Shaw if you’re sat more than 10 rows back, or even less there is no chance you will have those sensations to the same degree. Again, as Sophie pointed out the children got to come up on, and be part of a bigger, grander and for some no doubt scarier stage, which must have been a big boost to them, but I couldn’t see their faces, and couldn’t really tell. Another thing was pointed out by Neil Edmonds (Cooli Coolio, a water pistol) on the night bus home after a show; the relay system meant that all the authors took a bow together in the end and that deprived us from identifying each child with their individual play, and with it seeing their reaction to our reaction - a moment that will be discussed in more detail later (see Chapter Twelve). An uplifted and happy champagne sipping actor in the foyer afterwards flippantly answered my concerns about it with ‘Oh bugger the children – tonight was for us’. So much for claiming selfless actors! Well interestingly enough this one has never volunteered, but always supports by being in the audience. His interpretation of the intentions of the evening is worth noting though, because they’re not entirely based on a self-obsessed actor. S&H might have

wanted to give their fans and volunteers a special evening, but as always, ultimately the focus would have been with the children. It is therefore highly likely that his interpretation of the evening must have come as a result of the space and the vanishing children, rather than the actual intentions of S&H.



Future playwright.

Actors and their craft

The actors of S&H are a mixed bag; named alongside less known, highly experienced alongside less experienced but always devoted people; artistic and humanistic. They are never introduced with CVs in the programme and everybody is on equal footing in the production as again it is the children who are in focus. Recruitment happens 100% through word of mouth and recommendations between the artistes. Although this has proven successful, the initial pitching can sometimes be difficult probably mostly due to the fact that it easily sounds like children's theatre; theatre made and performed for children. Or it sounds like community theatre, both of which it is strongly interlinked with, but which far from completely describes it. It's tricky, or impossible to pin down a genre that in turn could give people an indication as to whether or not this would be something they would like to do, or even spend a couple of hours of their time watching. 'Trust me, you'll love it' doesn't work for everybody but 'I'm in it, come and see' usually does, at least for people within the theatre business. The

audience are invited into a surrealistic universe, a place where fantastical characters meet and for a moment, or a lifetime share some amazing trivialities or some trivial amazingness. An advertising system would be more risky for the organization and possibly attract a different breed of actors for all the wrong reasons. Still it happens, as Giles Taylor here describes, that someone from a different planet arrives:

[...] occasionally you get a bad egg, somebody who's a bit stary and goes 'Well I can't - I'm not changing in here with everybody' you know and you just go 'oh no - you're wrong, you're just wrong for S&H. This isn't - you're in it for all the wrong reasons, it's not about you'. And some actors sometimes perform as if it's a show case or something, and you go 'no, it's not about that, tell the story the child has written, that's what we're here to do and if along the way you do a bloody good job and people go 'that was great' then that's a lovely added boom'. (Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square, pre show 03.07.09)

Giles describes an organizational hygiene that might sound a bit harsh but it is the self-cleansing way to assure the overall aim and focus stays with the children in a business well known to be an ego greenhouse. It is also not possible to pin down an acting style, direction or theatre philosophy within S&H as such. Each actor, director and associated volunteer will come to the organization with their individual training and track history, which again will add up to the individual performances. But everybody is expected to contribute to the committed seriousness, and the serious playfulness that's embedded within the project. Due to the surreal nature of the characters, and as well the language in which the kids express themselves, it is not an acting job for beginners, quite the contrary as Giles again points out:

There are no limits, and that's what we teach the kids, but I love learning the lesson myself by acting in them particularly, because you have to make incredibly brave decisions, because it's incredibly exposing. And for me, and people send me up about this, but I do a lot of Shakespeare, and for me it is the closest text work I've ever done to Shakespeare, that isn't Shakespeare; because grammatically it's odd - it's not modern English often, you know, and the thought processes are peculiar, and the stories are difficult, and the emotional journeys are odd and not necessarily difficult, but very difficult to join together. And woe betide you if you try and manufacture from hate to love in one line. Just say it - just go there and the audience have no choice but

to come with you, and it's very similar in Shakespeare. (Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square, pre show 03.07.09)

Dominic Maxwell from the Times joined us at the dress rehearsal of *Jumping for Joy* and wrote an article about the work where he amongst others quoted Samuel West, actor and artistic director and patron of S&H:

These stories work because the kids are encouraged to see things from their characters' point of view. And because the adult actors play them without an atom of condescension. "You have to play it absolutely for real," West says. "If you play it like you're in something written by a child, you're going down". (<http://sceneandheard.org/home.html> 20.04.10)

This is further explained by Giles who continues his Shakespeare analogy:

You know in one scene you go from wanting to murder someone to having been persuaded that they should be king, and you're off, you know! And it's sort of as mad really, particularly with the linguistic thing, and they have this incredible economy of image and creation, which Shakespeare has of course. (Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square pre show 03.07.09)

And rounding off with an exemplifying story:

I always site a wonderful line that a kid wrote in a play I did quite early on. I played a grass hopper who was the manager of a castle, and the door bell rang and I opened the door and there was a female bear who wouldn't then come in and I had to say: 'I am inside of the castle, you are outside the castle, you may could come in Madame Bear'. And that 'may could' is genius! It's so polite and tentative; it's you are allowed and you are able to come in, aren't you? And that to me is Shakespearian, absolutely conjuring so much in two wrong words, you know, it's glorious - I love it. (Ibid.)

Costumes

An appointed volunteer costume designer is responsible for a fine mixture of purpose made and bought. The fact that the children aren't allowed to write human characters, but have to stick to nature -, object -, and object of nature characters make the design job a rather quirky, interesting and of course a very challenging one. Through the years the shows have seen some brilliant characters and they are always an important part of the show. As Giles again described:

One of my favorite things is when the lights go down for each play and the doors open and you see a silhouette coming and you go: ‘Oh what on earth is that? What is he dressed as?’ You know, I love it because you just go ‘I cannot wait for the lights to come up and see what that shape is. (Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square, pre show 03.07.09)

The costumes humanize the non-human characters; make them familiar within the human race. The fact that they are given jobs and families and wants and fears that filter through into the scripts from their character profiles, but also simply their species gives them recognizable features as people around us in our own community: the water pistol who dreams about becoming a real gun, the police constable / crime scene tape who has never solved a single crime, the dust mite who’ll go to any length to win a wig competition, the toe fungus who is socially less gifted and hangs around the chocolate bars at Sainsbury’s - if you think about it you probably know them all. The costumes help the actors a lot because they strongly signify character traits, which in turn frees them up to concentrate more on the story telling. Giles’ character in *Jumping For Joy* being a perfect example; Dave -The Solar System who works as a chef in a Punjabi restaurant in Uta’s play *Solar Cam* had checkers trousers, a classic white, double buttoned top with a checkers scarf around his neck, a high white chefs hat with colorful stars and planets circling around his head attached with steel wire.



Dave, the Solar System (Giles Taylor) in *Solar Cam* by Uta.

Props

The props used at S&H are very simple in a way that makes them rather spectacular; they are 2D, cut out of poly foam and coloured in with marker pens. The idea according to Sophie Boyack stems from The 52nd Street Project and is most likely to have economic reasons for coming into being. They present a challenge for the actors in action, and also for the audience in perception. They for instance have to be given weight in order to hold up an illusion, but could also indicate a character's super strength if not given the weight it normally would have in human terms. The 2D aspect in a 3-sided auditorium means the actors always have to be aware of how they hold them. A plate of food like in *Solar Cam* would in the real world of course be held vertically, but in order for the audience to see what they are dealing with the actors in this case turned the plate flat on – vertically, which in real life would involve food on the floor. For the audience the props offer a cartoon-like quality that indicates fun and fantasy, and allow for a level of imagination due to their endless possibilities that otherwise would be difficult for a low budget production to explore. They are obviously representational and completely rely on the audience's imagination playing along. There is usually a restriction of maximum 3 props per child due to them being time consuming to make.

Music – sound effects

Volunteers again compose the songs based on the lyrics written by the children. It's impossible to let all the children have one, so the lucky few are chosen at the dramaturges' meeting after day 1 of the writing weekend. The music is either played back over a stereo or performed live on an electrical piano or other instruments depending on the performers abilities and or availability of the composer. Music is allowed for dance and intermediating from one scene to another – for instance as transport from one place to another but no underscoring.

There's a rule of maximum 3 sound effects per child. Between the plays there's always music while the simple scene changes, run by the actors that have just finished take place, this crewing assures smooth running of the show without needing more

technical people. The in-between music is very often an indication of theme, location or atmosphere of the play coming up. Sometimes an actor from a different group is called in to do a voice from off stage, like in Nora's play *Double Paris* where the resolving moment, when the characters get what they want in the end is relying on a one-liner from a heavy French accented head chef.

Text and reoccurring themes

The dramaturges are strictly instructed not to interfere with the children's grammar and way of expressing themselves. In a case where a dramaturge might have been part of suggesting a direction or developing an idea together with a child it is still the child's way of expressing the idea that is desired. A returning member of the audience will after a couple of shows recognize the structure to which the plays are written; wants and fears as basis for character driven conflicts plots and resolutions. Thematically the children explore in all sorts of directions however there are some reoccurring themes and *Jumping for Joy* was a rather representative batch:

Missing Love by Peter, aged 9. A love story between Coupana, a money off coupon and Brrring, an F-Chord on a vijojong.

The Upside Down Friendship by Tom, aged 11. A story about loneliness, friendship and deceit between Mount Davrah – the second biggest mountain in the world and P.C. Scaevenge, a private detective hyena.

A Weird Friendship by Barry, aged 10. A story about Ming Chang, a pterodactyl and Lucy Lunette, a pair of glasses who between them strike deals to escape personal imprisonment, risking death on the way.

The poison in the Plan by Zahin, aged 10. A story set in the Queens toilet in Buckingham Palace where Serial Killer, a scorpion and Tom the posh toilet help each other in clever ways to return to their families where they belong.

Double Paris by Nora, aged 10. A story about Strawberry Sundae, a recipe book and Fresh, toe fungus bacteria who through a mix of magical physics and British Airwas 3rd class travel to Paris fulfilling each others dreams and possibly finding love on the way.

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow by Beatrice, aged 10. Harold Pratworth, police constable / crime scene tape solves his first police case in a lifetime career by revealing Amanda Pop-Pip, a dust mite as a thief of important murder case evidence.

Body Parts Change Once and For All by Niels, aged 9. A dramatic story about Connect4Dummy, a Connect Four board game and Hong Kong, the country about sacrificing your life for a friend.

Solar Cam by Uta, aged 10. A love story between Dave, the solar system who works as a chef and Julia an underwater CCTV camera.

Weather Control by Talia, aged 9. A story about Wilma Weather, the weather forecast and Coolie Coolio, a water pistol about helping each other and becoming what you've always wanted to be.

The theme of loss or fear of loss turn up a lot; fear of losing parents or family members, losing friends or losing jobs. Due to the writing formula all sorts of deals are struck in order to achieve biggest wants and avoid biggest fears. Love stories return over and over again too and from a grown up perspective it's often possible to pick up a lurking puberty in mostly innocent and highly entertaining ways; flowers and insects and innocent kisses. There's even a legendary story about a pond that got wetter and wetter as somebody came further and further into her. There's suspicion that this girl knew what she was indicating, but rules say that grown ups can't interfere and her story was as valid as all the others'. The line 'I'd like to be plucked, not bowed' from *Missing Love* is a reflexion of the F-chord character Brrrings dreams, not a deliberate sexual innuendo from the young writer. Sometimes the themes are less lurking and more direct also indicating social and political issues that are on the children's minds. Coolie Coolio, the water pistol who wants to become a real gun never achieved that, but he did join the army and while serving in Sudan he 'helped Sudan by spraying water in their mouth'. The young writer's family was from Sudan and she was clearly informed about draught and war in her family's country of origin, where she probably still has relatives. Coolio's partner on stage Weather Wilma told us how her parents wanted her to wear geeky, scientist clothes while she

wanted to be a gymnast, which would involve a very different set of clothes. Giles Taylor gave another example:

There was an extraordinary play I did once where I played a young giraffe, a Scottish giraffe who was lost in Africa and I can't remember what the other character was but they came out of the sand, I think it was the desert, yes I'm pretty sure it was the desert. Anyway it was about a war between the humans and how it was ruining the animal life as well, and the king, the bad king lived in a cave and this was all in the time of the Afghanistan War with Bin Laden reputedly hiding in a cave, and I'm sure this child, who was 10 or 11, had taken this in on some level; listening to the news while he was playing or something, just knew that this was going on. (Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square, pre show 03.07.09)

Dramaturgical building blocks

As mentioned earlier - on an individual level each child's play within it's own frame is encouraged to follow a logical and traditional dramaturgy however the end results don't always convey that. The producer - in the case, of *Jumping for Joy* the multitasking Roz Paul was responsible for setting up the overall dramaturgy - the order of the plays. According to Roz it's a complex balancing act that involves at least the following considerations:

1. Volunteer availability (e.g. some actors may need to arrive late or leave early for one of the performances, necessitating them being in a particular act)
2. Subject matter - splitting up any plays that have similar themes
3. Separating the songs - there are usually three
4. The opening play needs to be a 'typical' S&H play and needs to have clarity in the story telling in order that any audience members new to the work are not too overwhelmed by the surreal nature of the work - introducing them gently.
5. Interspersing the complex with the more obvious plays and the long with the short to give light and shade to the overall experience of the evening.
6. Go into the interval on a high – e.g. a very funny play, or an uplifting song etc.
7. End where possible with a very powerful piece, be it happy or sad and hopefully very good performances.

(Email correspondence with Roz Paul – 07.01.2010 is available in a folder on request.)

The above mentioned mix of practical and dramaturgical key points should be familiar to people who work with cabaret or a similar individual piece by piece genre of entertainment. Once the practical considerations are covered the programming is all about catching the interest of the audience and keeping it through a gradual build and sustaining of energy; creating and maintaining a positive feedback loop. Possibly these dramaturgical tools are most recognizable in band concerts. A band will start with a few hits or at least a few numbers the audiences are familiar with to warm up, get good will, and get the audience on their side; ‘co-subjectify’ them - invite them to join the loop. Once the connection is up and running it’s possible to introduce new material, or less accessible material, which again will be ‘rewarded’ with an ending on some ‘greatest hits’ to assure the audience leave on a high, well spirited to spread the gospels about the concert, the performance or the band.

CHAPTER EIGHT: TOWARDS THE MOMENT – IN THEORY

The autopoietic feedback loop

In her book *The Transformative Power of Performance A New Aesthetics* (2008) Erica Fischer-Lichte offers an elaborate tool enabling a detailed investigation and analysis of the phenomenon performance as an event. At the core of this aesthetics is the specific dynamic activities and processes that take place between actors and spectators at any given time during a performance. Of particular interest to this project is her concept of the *autopoietic feedback loop*. Autopoietic systems are as Marvin Carlson describes in his introduction to the book: “simultaneously producers and products, circular systems that survive by self generation.” (Erika Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 7) An autopoietic feedback loop is a way of describing the emergence - and journey of the energy that travels in the space during a performance. Her concept not only recognizes the importance of the audience as co- participants through their contribution to this energy during the events, it gives priority to this interaction over other components of the performance. Fischer-Lichte reconstructs the works of German theatre scholar Max Herrmann and uses it as her point of departure:

To Herrmann, the “creative” activity of the audience resulted from a “secret empathy, a shadowy reconstruction of the actors’ performance which is experienced not so much visually as through *physical sensation* (author’s emphasis)” [...] At the heart of Herrmann’s notion of performance lies the shift from theatre as a work of art to theatre as an event.
(Erika Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 35-36)

As part of her investigation of the self referential and constantly shifting feedback loop Fischer-Lichte looks at the subject-object relationship in role reversal during a performance and further at what this could mean in terms of the experience for those involved both socially, aesthetically and politically expressed amongst other things through the creation of community. Fischer-Lichte as a consequence looks at the relationship between the production of meaning and the effect it evokes and points out

that since ‘the performative turn’ of the 60s theatre and performance artistes mostly well rooted in, or at least highly inspired by, the historical avant-garde movement have through their work taken multiple directions to examine the fluid relationship between meaning and effect and materiality and semioticity. This has frequently been done by challenging the more traditionally perceived and sought after balance between subject and object in a performance situation. Through their work these artistes have practiced a performative aesthetic that Fischer-Lichte in her book offers a theoretical account and analysis of. It is also of interest to this project that Fischer-Lichte, again with Max Hermann as her point of departure, regards sensations and emotions as meanings and thereby states of consciousness manifested as physical articulations that are transmittable to others without having been ‘translated’ into words. “If ‘effect’ is described as the interference into the process of the feedback loop’s self organization, it follows that meanings can be defined as effects as long as they impact on the feedback loop.” (Erica Fischer- Lichte, 2008, p. 151-152) Fischer-Lichte regards us thus as *embodied minds* that in an event whether as audience or performer individually always contribute with our meanings not only through the audible and visible signs like clapping, laughing and crying, but through all our physically articulated emotions although we never individually control the energy dynamic or outcome of it.

The Efficacy - Entertainment Braid

Richard Schechner has in his book *Performance Theory* developed the efficacy - entertainment braid, a theory that indicates a possible understanding of some achieved effects that S&H have on all participants through their work. The model introduces a way of analyzing performance through a binary, constant, wavy movement between efficacy/ritual and entertainment/theatre. This model puts a theoretical perspective on a mechanism that has been and is in operation in all our social interaction that involves any kind of performance. It offers a list of what properties most probably would be present in a performance intended to have a transformative effect – to be efficacious, and thus become ritualistic, and a list of qualities that would be present in performances intended as theatre – entertainment:

Efficacy Ritual	Entertainment Theatre
Results	Fun
Link to absent other	Only for those there
Symbolic time	Emphasis now
Performer possessed, in trance	Performer knows what s/he is doing
Audience participates	Audience watches
Audience believes	Audience appreciates
Criticism discouraged	Criticism flourishes
Collective creativity	Individual creativity

(Schechner, 2003, p. 130)

Schechner makes it clear that a lot of factors are involved in deciding to which way the pendulum swings, it will most certainly depend on the width of focus the lens with which the performance is studied; only the time and place of the performance itself or including intentions, preparations and aftermath. Schechner also describes how efficacy historically changes with time and as such would indicate different things at different occasions at different times to different people. So pre-warned by Schechner himself I did not expect that all the qualities he proposes within the model would be relevant in this particular case, a preconception that proved right and will be clarified later.

The lense

Through my research I have gathered information about S&H's work with as wide a lens as possible. As should be clear from chapters gone - I have mapped out S&H's intentions through reading up on the written material that pre existed on the organization, interviewed one of the founders, several of the volunteers, family members, teachers and tried to create a clear picture of what they strive to achieve and what they do accomplish. I followed the teaching of *Playmaking One* step by step to see how the scripts, as components of the theatre event itself came to their written

forms. I followed a script from paper to production through the work of the industry professionals, and finally and most importantly I observed the performances themselves, the point when it all came together and manifested itself in time and place into the events. This being a hermeneutic thesis I have trusted my own ability to experience and describe what went on, as well as supported my subjective impressions through qualitative interviews. In turn I have filtered the gathered material through the theoretical concepts presented in this chapter.

Event vs performance

In this thesis I will be very specific about the use of the two terms ‘performance’ and ‘event’. When using the word performance it will be either in conjunction with the word show; in reference to the display of artistic activity in front of an audience in general, or to the performances that took place; the specific pre planned artistic activity that happened at Teatro Technis on 3 evenings and one afternoon last July. I will then use the term event when I refer in general to, or with specificity to the same performances in a bigger perspective. The term event will be investigated in detail through the applied theory and as Sauter points out by incorporating the “performer’s and spectator’s sensory experience of a theatrical situation.” (Sauter, 2006, p. 1)

Highlighting that “It is the eventness of the encounter between performer and spectator that characterizes a performance.” (Ibid.) In other words when the potential transformative aspects and efficacy has come in to play through the acknowledgement that the audience, the receptors actively play a part in the creation of the phenomenon on an equal footing with the artists. Based on this simultaneous, **everybody** present’s contribution to both production and reception the event and the further emergence of meaning will be investigated.

Fischer-Lichte vs Schechner

I would also like to point out that the choice of the two main theoreticians is pragmatically chosen to suit this thesis and does not indicate that they necessarily follow each other without difference in opinion. Quite the contrary, they have quite opposing views at times, as Fischer-Lichte points out:

Two aspects of Schechner's assessment of audience participation are particularly remarkable: he emphasizes the relationship between equal co-subjects ("to enter the performance as equals," "according to the democratic model") and sets up opposition between the aesthetic process of "play" and the "social event" created through the audience participation in the performance. [...] any gathering of people always constitutes a social situation. It is therefore surprising that Schechner draws up performance in opposition to social event. (Fischer-Lichte, 2008 p. 41-43)

This distinction is included here since the matter in question is so fundamental as a point of departure for this thesis. There should be no doubt that this thesis, on this matter, fundamentally follows a path closer to Fischer-Lichte. This personal placing in the field is likely to have come about due to my practical background: My awareness to, and emphasis on inclusion of the audience in a theatrical event when performing myself, is fundamental to my understanding of what I artistically do. Indeed when working with monologue material there are no other co-players than the audience.

It will be clear throughout this paper that a certain methodological and theoretical fluidity has been necessary on many levels. But I believe it is possible to trace an internal feedback loop that runs through this paper; intentionally created and hopefully growing in it's autopoeticity; a loop that feeds both of theoretic inspiration, aesthetic love and social care.

Relational Aesthetics and Social Acupuncture

There's twice been a change in sub title since my initial project outline; from a 'dramatic project in Somers Town-' to a 'relational project in Somers Town' - and finally 'the Moment of Enchantment'. This is a reflection of the journey that the writing has been. The first title was indicating the dramatic work that the children create, as well as the dramatic impact the work might have. The second title came as a result of a process where I for a while intended to see if it was possible to approach the research material through the perspective of Nicolas Bourriaud's publication *Relational Aesthetics* (Bourriaud, 2002). Bourriaud struck a few chords by

acknowledging “interactive, user-friendly and relational concepts” (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 8) as the “liveliest factor” (ibid.) on the “chessboard of art” (ibid.). Initially this seemed like a great concept to approach S&H with; a theory that sidelined social aspects with aesthetic aspects. For a while I was really excited about it, possibly even secretly a bit in love with Bourriaud’s brain child, but it became necessary to kill a darling. I gave it up, although it visibly marked my work and way of thinking. The reason for abandoning it as my main projects was that I came to the conclusion that it’s a theory developed for a different kind of art field, and I didn’t see the point of molding it forcefully into the context of this thesis. This doesn’t mean that there’s nothing relational about S&H’s work – quite the contrary. The relational aspects have been investigated as part of the process, and I’ve come to suspect that it is one of the main ingredients in making the work efficacious. Bourriaud’s theory has as such continued to be an important source of inspiration, and no doubt has it been baked into the pie, but no longer is it one of my main theories of referral. It was Darren O’Donnell who introduced me to Bourriaud’s work when he presented his own work at a conference in Oslo autumn 2008. As a writer, theatre practitioner and founder of the Canadian theatre company Mammalian Diving Reflex he is very much inspired by *Relational Aesthetics*, and is striving to incorporate the philosophy into his own work. In doing so he has adopted the notion of the ancient Chinese healing tradition and regards aspects of his work as *social acupuncture*. The shift of focus that O’Donnell describes in his book *Social Acupuncture: A guide to Suicide, Performance and Utopia* (O’Donnell, 2006) pulls on a small scale a practical example of what Fischer-Lichte historically points out as the theoretical shift of focus - from work of art to event; ‘the performative turn’. This could be read as an example of another feedback loop that runs between theoreticians and practitioners of both theatre and other related art forms. I find the holistic concept social acupuncture very vivid and helpful in the perspective of S&H, and it will in the thesis turn up as a way of describing aspects of the work. It goes without saying that O’Donnell has already done what I decided not to, namely to adopt the relational aesthetics to his own field, validate it in theatrical terms, and in doing so he has upgraded the theatrical event to a work of art in the same way as Bourriaud did in visual arts; from seeing a work of art separate to the effects it causes, to seeing the whole event with its effects as a work of art in its own right. The use of the concept social acupuncture in this thesis can therefore be seen as a interpretation of *Relational Aesthetics* through the work of O’Donnell.

The ritualistic perspective; liminal and liminoid

As stated introductory: using Schechner's efficacy-entertainment braid as one of my main theories naturally lead to the work of Victor Turner because of their common point of focus and obvious mutual feeding of each other. Turner uses the work of Arnold Van Gennep as his point of departure in his essay *Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, Ritual*, in the book *From Ritual to Theatre – The Human Seriousness of Play* (Turner, 1982, p. 24). In *Rites De Passage*, according to Turner first published in French in 1908, Van Gennep describes the three phases in a rite of passage: separation, transition and incorporation. These three phases together create a *liminal* process, which has the purpose to permanently change someone's social status within a community. Liminal by his definition are phenomena amongst other things "integrated into the a total social process [...]. They reflect, on probing the history of the group, i.e., its collective experience, over time." (Turner, 1982, p. 54) This works a treat when describing a tribal ritual or a religious ceremony, but comes down a bit too heavy-handed when applied to a phenomenon like S&H. However Turner, by introducing the term *liminoid* offers a seemingly more user-friendly in the arts, modern industrial society, pragmatic version of the phenomenon. Liminoid phenomena amongst many other things are

[...] along the margins [...] plural, fragmentary, and experimental in character [...]. Their symbols are closer to the personal psychological than to the "objective - social" typological pole. [...] exposing the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations. (Ibid.)

The concept liminoid, due to its less historically demanding criteria, opens the possibility to look for liminal traces amongst more secular events, involving people with less common history. In a cosmopolitan, urban environment like Somers Town, where there would be comparatively little common history amongst most of the inhabitants, it would be more feasible to assume that any liminoid experience would belong on a 'personal psychological' level rather than a 'objective- social typological pole'. Turner's socio political description also seem fitting to Somers Town as an area. Reading between the lines it could even be suggested that liminoid phenomena are more likely to happen in such an area; recognisable for its injustices,

inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations.

Flow and Communitas

Two other Turner terms has helped to paint a ‘physio-visual’ picture of what a S&H event would entail is *flow* and *communitas*. Communitas described by Turner, quoting himself is a: “way by which persons see, understand and act towards one another ((quote found – my note) in *The Ritual Process*) as essentially “an un mediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals.” (Turner, 1982, p. 45) Turner further distinguishes communitas from *communion* because communion “presupposes states of collective ecstasy” (ibid.) whilst “communitas preserves individual distinctiveness – it is neither regression to infancy, nor is it emotional, nor is it “merging” in fantasy.” (Turner, 1982 p. 45-46) Turner explains that communitas has “something of a “flow” quality” (Turner, 1982, p. 58). Flow is a term he has picked up from the play research done by Hungarian Professor of Psychology Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and American Professor of Social Science John MacAloon and that he by quoting an unpublished article called *Play and Intrinsic Rewards* explains in the following manner:

Flow denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement,” and is “a state in which action follows action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part... we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present or future. (Turner, 1982, p. 56)

Flow is thereby an individual experience of forgetting oneself in the present, totally giving in to the moment. It is a psychological description that seems very close to what all versions of Zen philosophy aim for; a unification between oneself and the now, an emptying of the mind so the now can be experienced fully beyond an intellectual understanding of it. Flow is not communitas, but communitas is likely to have flow elements or flow moments on an individual level within it. Communitas is

dependent on togetherness while flow can be experienced alone. In an extreme interpretation it is tempting to say that flow is an experience through which it is possible to reach ones 'full potential' as a human being. Interpreting *communitas* as extremely would mean that *communitas* carries the possibility of reaching our 'full potential' as any given group moving towards the same goal. Turner turns to Martin Buber's notions of the *I-and-Thou* and the *Essential We* to explain this as he says:

[...] people moving towards a freely chosen common goal are intuitive perceptions of a non transactional order or quality of human relationship, in the sense that people do not necessarily initiate action towards one another in the expectation of a reaction that satisfies their interests. (Turner, 1982, p. 46)

The *Essential We* and the *communitas*, in other words, has something altruistic about it, just like, on an individual level, the volunteers of S&H have (see Chapter Three). It is tempting to suggest that *communitas* possibly even occurs more easily amongst people who have this feature ready available within them.

The theoretical Moment of Enchantment

When the autopoietic feedback loop is up and working during a performance it opens the possibility of what Erica Fischer-Lichte calls *moments of enchantment*; moments when the possibility of a deeper understanding of our common being in the world arises. These moments are the moments that lay the foundation of what she refers to as 'the transformative power of performance'. These moments are thus the moments from when on a performance, within the parameters of this thesis, becomes 'active', and to use the term from Schechner becomes *efficacious*, or in other words again; the moment from when on the transformative aspect of the performance comes alive. This process is what turns the performance from a separated work of art into an event. It is as such implied that the event is a greater reaching phenomenon, a phenomenon that resonates further into people's souls and lives than the isolated work of art that is the performance, but it is part and parcel of it all; performances carry the possibility of becoming events. By the performance's very nature of interaction between actors and spectators the work of art becomes a facilitator for these moments to come into being.

CHAPTER NINE: THE AGENTS OF THE FEEDBACKLOOP

As stated in Chapter Eight Erica Fischer-Lichte, based on the writings of Max Hermann uses ‘bodily co-presence of actors and spectators’ as her point of departure to investigate the event that takes place based on the performance. As a regular ‘bodily co-present’ person in the theatre I have rarely experienced a more potent feedback loop than the one that occurs in S&H shows, and that initiated my curiosity towards the phenomenon. I will in this section investigate the three bodily contributing agents in a S&H event; the children, the actors and the audience as well as a fourth metaphorical agent; the frame. I will describe briefly Somers Town as an area of London to get an idea of where the children that partake in the project come from as well as their friends and family who come to see the show. I will then briefly look at the working conditions for the theatre workers of London to describe where the actors ‘come’ from. Finally I will present some simplified demographics about the audience and list a few points about living in urbane, cosmopolitan London as a reflexion of where the audience ‘come from’, all in order to start sketching out the fourth agent – the frame, to understand how the event comes about. I will also as an example of the journey from audience to volunteer recall my first night at an event.

Children of Somers Town

Somers Town today is a multicultural and comparatively deprived area. A large population of first, second and third generation immigrants live there, and this melting pot servers up a multitude of challenges for the population and local government. As a consequence Somers Town was the first ‘Good Behaviour’ zone in London when Camden Council in 2003 introduced new methods of getting to grips with problem areas under the new *Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003*

(http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030038_en_1 20.04.10). This is a clear symptom of the problems that are rife in this area, and that is an important part of the habitat of the S&H kids. This neighbourhood between Euston Road, Evershot Street, Crowndale Road and Pancras Road just north of the trio of railway stations

Kings Cross, Euston and St. Pancras has a long history of violence and gang crime. These conditions breed fear amongst the families who live there of which, as always, most people are peaceful. Growing up with this constant fear means a lot of the children are very protected by their parents. One of the girls on the course was initially not allowed to join, but after the mother of a previous S&H child from the same minority background, who lived on the same council estate, talked to the mother of this particular girl, she was allowed to join us under the condition that she was always picked up and walked home by grown ups from S&H. This girl lived in a 2 bedroom flat with her parents, brother and 3 sisters. Her brother slept in one bedroom, her father on the sofa in the living room, and all the women, including a 10 months old baby, slept in the other bedroom. She was rarely allowed to go to anything but school, and used to be stood waiting on the landing outside their flat for us to pick her up. As soon as we came around the corner she came dashing down the stairs with a spring in her step. Her sparkly eyes told us what a great experience the whole thing was for her, and as her dramaturge Shelly Silas said:

Uta I think has a very difficult life and doesn't have - I don't think her family have the time to give her the encouragement she needs. I think they adore her and I think she's very well loved and a very happy child, but as with a lot of kids from large families they just don't have the time. So I think coming on to the first course at S&H she actually had some one-to-one time with me that she's probably never had before from anybody. (Interview Shelly Silas, in her kitchen, Brixton, afternoon 08.07.09)

Freelance actors

This thesis is no in-depth look on the conditions under which freelance actors in London live and work, but because of the specificity of this project, and the importance of the artists within the organization it is worth mentioning a few points. The nature of freelancing in it self is a shifty one; jumping from one company to another, touring months on end in and out of the country, never knowing where tomorrows dinner's going to come from. Your best friend in your company today is highly likely to be your worst enemy in your audition tomorrow. Often out of necessity having to take jobs that artistically are less challenging, or even not within the business itself is no easy life, and at times very unsatisfying for personal and professional growth. Rumours have it that 9 out of 10 actors in London are at any time out of work and that 9/10 of the total industry salary is taken by 1 out of the 10

that are working; a picture that's pretty unfair and sadly probably very close to the truth. According to Sophie Boyack S&H have approximately 400 volunteers in their pool of theatre workers. It is an incredible amount of people, talent and will to work gathered around an organization that doesn't even offer travel expenses. When talking about S&H to a well known Norwegian playwright, who is pretty familiar with the UK theatre scene, his response to the astonishing number of volunteers was along the lines of "Oh I see, so they operate on the edges of the fringe system", indicating that the actors involved had little or nothing else to do; acting on the fringe of the fringe. His premature conclusion carry several indications including some very ingrown Norwegian prejudice that I will return to later, but his presumption is no reflexion of reality. I have not researched the merits of the S&H actors, as mentioned before; their resumes are not presented in the performance program, a fact that in it self is debated amongst the actors. There is a fundamental difference in the theatre world of Norway and the theatre world of the UK in terms of stability of work and attitude towards pay and social security, this difference is countered by a growing base of freelancers in Norway, however Norwegian cultural politics at the moment is countering the counter through a growing budget and a growing concern aiming at bettering the conditions for the freelance base of artists. What to my fellow Norwegian colleague seems difficult to imagine is the fact that what these actors do this job for the children, as well as for their own professional growth as actors and personal growth as people. It is the charitable factor that attracts the artists in the first place, and in turn the professional challenges that make people come back for more. On the one hand it's a complex problem that involves fighting old public and organizational attitudes where actor's work often are the last on the pay list, but on this occasion there's more to it than that. There is a Norwegian privileged assumption that less talented actors don't work, and if you do work for free it's because you don't have a choice. A quick googleing of some S&H old timers like Don Gilet and Damian Lewis, or the turn up at this summers event of Honorary Patrons Hugh Bonneville and Michael Sheen tells a very different story. Comparatively lack of charity history in Norway could possibly be a way of attempting an explanation, which could be viewed as a result of a historically much flatter structured class system. The dying 'dugnads ånd' on this side of the North Sea might be the closest correspondent Norway has, which on the other hand is rather unexplored in the UK. But these are all questions of comparative nature

indicating amongst other things the pros and cons for starting a similar project in Norway something I will return to towards the end.



Brrring, an F Chord on a vijojong (Steve Hansell) in *Missing Love* by Peter.

Audience –London people

The S&H audience are mostly Londoners, cosmopolitan, urbane living people, possibly the worlds most spoilt for choice when it comes to theatrical entertainment. Looking at the results of the audience questionnaire (despite its methodological weaknesses) 2 of the 5 friends or family of children had been to see a show before

whilst 31 of 63 friends and family of volunteers had, and 9 out of 19 of the general audience had been before which means in total about 41% of the people who were present and took the time to answer the questionnaire were regulars or at least had been before; 1-15 times according to themselves. It is within reason to assume that the 63 friends and family of the volunteers as well as the 29 general others are likely to have been to the theatre before, and not unlikely quite often too. Furthermore it is possible to think that most of them had basic knowledge and some of them were very well informed about the organization, their aims and strategies, which in turn could give them a purpose with coming to the theatre other than personal entertainment and or supporting a friend or colleague. In other words 41% of the audience are likely to have arrived with good intentions towards the children based on previous experience with S&H, and this created an expecting atmosphere that was noticeable in the room as a quality, sketching out the frame of the experience even before arriving at the door.

The innocent first night in the audience

On the other hand there's the first timers, the ones who come along to support a friend or have somehow been enrolled by a devoted fan, and of course the families of the first time playwrights. They will also have expectations and preconceived ideas about what they are about to experience based on what they've been told, however it seems difficult to imagine anybody have their expectations met or rather anybody have imagined what to expect. It seems about right here to try to recall my own first night in the audience at S&H: I had heard about the organization via colleagues, I had even seen a dress rehearsal on an at the time rare evening off in London, but I hadn't seen the 'real thing'. My colleague on tour for the past 10 months had invited me - Daniel Copeland, a many times actor-volunteer for S&H. He suggested I'd volunteer to heal my post show blues. After having been to a general information meeting followed by a general trip to the Hope and Anchor (just to get the right habits in place from day one) I was due to see my first show. I arrived alone and was quite baffled by the buzz. I entered the theatre and sat down in a free chair but was in a friendly manner told 'sorry but those chairs are for the children'. I remember feeling a bit confused, in a good way, I think, but still confused. It seemed like a lot of people knew each other or

at least that everybody knew somebody, and that certainly nobody else was so new that they would try to sit on the children's chairs! It seemed like most people took such ownership of the room in a way that was unfamiliar to me, despite a self-perceived idea that I'm pretty familiar with most variations of theatrical settings. The lights came down and the show came up. A couple of hours later I'd discovered some familiar faces amongst the actors, I'd seen some mind boggling characters performed with assured craft, and witnessed a show kept on track in a very professional manner. I'd sat in the midst of an audience that laughed and cried and cheered like no other performance I'd ever experienced. My initial 'confusiasm' had turned into enthusiasm – I was a devoted fan and an hour of mingling later I was back in the Hope and Anchor convinced that if they'd have me I was going to volunteer to do the next show. I did.

Performative audience

The behaviour of the audience during a S&H event is performative and happens due to the framing mentioned above, built up of intentions. The context is therefore metaphorically one of the main agents that is part of upgrading the performance to an event due to these preliminary intentions from a great number of the people present, enforced by the contagious atmosphere, which in turn of course is helped very much by the high standard of work from the professionals. The context encourages community building, togetherness and support, and the audience clapping and cheering for the children and artists is an expression of this. Just like a football audience that know their support is of massive importance to their team's achievements, a substantial part of the S&H audience arrive ready and willing to contribute with their supportive energy. It's possible to think that the more conscious people are of the reason they are there, the more deliberately they contribute to the energy in the room and as a consequence the more performative their contributions become - the more 'efficacious' they become. The children's personal experience of 'success' that S&H aim for in their mission statement is therefore completely depending on this frame.

CHAPTER TEN: THE EVENTNESS OF THE EVENT

As mentioned in Chapter Eight, the use of these two words *performance* and *event* carry a significant indication in this thesis. Indeed it is the ‘upgrading’ from performance to event that is the heart of the efficacy that is sought after, the moment when a heightened consciousness, even if it be a physical and not mental consciousness arises – *embodied minds*; when the divide between subject and object is erased and replaced by only co-subjects and every **body** present contributes and become part of the autopoietic energy that feeds the loop that causes and simultaneously is a result of the efficacy. Willmar Sauter in his book *eventness* (2006) investigates the nature of the theatrical event through a different model, and suggests “a concept consisting of four components: Theatrical Playing – Playing Culture – Cultural Context – Contextual Theatricality” (Sauter, 2006, p. 9). Within this non-hierarchical circle all the elements also interrelate with each other individually in a diamond shape. In the section below components of a S&H event will be recognised, in a highly pragmatical way, within this system before turning to the flesh and blood of the event – the opening night of *Jumping for Joy*. Sauter works his way through many approaches, philosophies and angles on the four components and the following ones have been chosen because they highlight a specific area of the work that S&H do in a way different way to all the other applied theories.

Playing Culture

Examining the playing culture within S&H could well have been a thesis in its own right, as it simply is the very nature of most of its activity. It is by cultivating variations of playing as a phenomenon that the organization achieves its goals. By letting grown ups play with the kids and further adding ‘theatrical-play’ and shaking it about, they aim to give the children an experience to stretch their minds. Sauter, supporting himself on Hans-Georg Gadamer, philosophically describes playing as a time pass “not trying to accomplish any task for survival.” (Sauter, 2006, p. 13) In an urbane jungle like Somers Town though S&H, through play, are aiming to offer extra

curricular survival kits for the children, emphasising that their imagination could well be, if not a direct life saver, then at least a life improver if they do raise their aspirations. So even if the very basic nature of play in itself doesn't save any lives within the game, the playing itself, within this organization, is employed very purposefully. The playing culture in S&H is highly conscious and deliberate though not forcefully applied. On the night of the performances, as described above, it lies as a fundament, an attitude to be adopted by everybody, and as pointed out, even the audience by engaging with their performative response partake in aspects of the playing, contributing to the eventness of it all.

Theatrical Playing

Theatrical playing is what keeps the wheels turning at S&H; it is the principal on which the organization has built up its entire system. It is through recognising the power of theatrical communication that this concept as a whole has developed. During the S&H event there is one relationship though, or one dimension worth noting that isn't included in any of the classical models of investigating theatrical playing. The most famous formula; Bentley's ABC, from his book *The Life of Drama*, according to Sauter from 1966, is a good example: A (the actor) plays B (the character) for C (the spectator). What's different at S&H compared to most other theatrical events is C. As pointed out C, at a S&H event consists of many people who are well familiar with the aims of the organization and who are there to be entertained, but also a fair few of them to deliberately contribute to the theatrical playing through their performative behaviour. Also amongst C are the child authors, at whom the theatrical playing ultimately is - not so much singularly focussing on, it's obviously focussing on the entire audience - but specifically messaging to. These 'special members' of C are in this case the minds behind B, something A is well aware of. An author's presence in the theatre at her/his own play is of course not such a rare thing, and always adds extra pressure on the actors, as in this case as well. On top of that the actors also know that it's their job to fill in the gaps and 'make it happen', where the child possibly didn't quite bridge the different bits of her/his story. They also know that they are in competition with TV, film and video games when it comes to bringing to life what the kids have seen with their inner eye whilst writing. This heightened awareness between

A and C, on behalf of B, is part of the communication, raising the stakes and increasing the eventness of it.

Contextual Theatricality

Sauter offers several ways of interpreting theatricality, and proposes that Contextual Theatricality is “a distinct field of theatrical activities that at a certain time and place are regarded as ‘theatre’” (Sauter, 2006, p. 64-65) but also recognises the fact that there are event due to their theatrical context are excluded from this definition. He then further suggests that “theatricality can be understood as a mode of communication rather than a definition of theatre.”(Ibid.) Understanding the S&H eventness within Suater’s suggested ‘mode of communication’ could bring us to the following: It is in the contextualisation of the theatricality (theatricality here understood as a mode of communication) that the Meta message in the work is found. It is in the doings of the professionals and the audience alike that, in this case, the children are ‘told’ of their imaginative power and community worth. It’s in this aspect of Sauter’s eventness that this message is ‘formulated’. Today it is a big degree of ‘well-trained’ audience that ‘speaks this language’ and creates this context but 11 years ago, at the Basil Jellico Hall nobody had seen a S&H performance, it was pre context - or at least pre such a loaded context with such a clear ‘language’:

[...] it all happened so quickly and suddenly the audience were there and it started and I thought ‘Oh my God, is this gonna work? [...] and that’s quite interesting because the audience didn’t really know either, so for the first few plays they were sitting there thinking ‘Does this work?’ And then they sort of warmed up, and they were kind of thinking ‘Oh it does.’ And of course you can never recreate that because there’s too much history now but because no one had ever seen it before - and then there was this huge relief about halfway though ‘No actually, God, no it does work - they are reacting’ and it was very genuine. And I think what happened was the audience didn’t quite know how to react because there was no one else sitting there who had been before and knew [...] and I think that’s quite interesting, that audiences pick up on one and other very quickly. You only need - I mean that’s why people have plants, you know, you only need a few people in the audience to know how to react and everyone, you know crowd mentality is incredible. So without that on the very first performance it was quite interesting. (Interview Sophie Boyack, coffee shop on patio outside British Library 22.07.09)

Sauter uses another element to describe contextual theatricality from Pierre Bourdieu; *field* and adopts it to suit his own theatrical investigation as *theatrical field*. A field “is a virtual arena, a social precinct, occupied by agents, who have some important aspect of their lives in common, fighting each other and competing for dominant positions” (Sauter, 2006, p. 70). S&H differs in many ways to other events in the field through its nature, and would in many ways fit what Sauter calls a *sub field* as they are relieved from relying on many of the forces that often operate in a field; they don’t do marketing other than network marketing, they have no academy overseeing and influencing what they do, setting premises for their development, or they are not depending on critics to get bums on seats. In other words they are in many ways autonomous within the theatrical field. That by far means they are completely independent of power structures. In order to gain their revenue, S&H build their strength on what Bourdieu calls symbolic capital. Their strongest currency is ideology represented by social, educational and professional values, but they also attract influential people to assure their attractiveness in the business. The list is long and the reason these people of high symbolic value within the business pull to S&H could be many and varied, possibly even to increase their own symbolic value by being associated with perceived good ideology – a total win-win situation. Although as Dominic Maxwell in The Times article quoted earlier (see Chapter Seven) pointed out: “it’s not just worthiness that has brought the company celebrity supporters such as Damian Lewis, Emily Watson, Michael Sheen, Bill Nighy and Samuel West. It’s entertainment value too. “Scene & Heard is the most fun I’ve ever had in a theatre,” insists West, who reckons he has seen 25 of their shows. “I’m not kidding. It’s simply joyous.” (<http://sceneandheard.org/home.html> 20.04.10) Either way, their contribution is of immense importance symbolically for the children but also very much for the other volunteers, not to mention private and corporate sponsors.

Cultural Context

As with all the elements within Sauter’s circle-diamond, the cultural context is strongly inter connected with all the other elements, but Sauter especially points out the strong connection between contextual theatricality and cultural context. The complex cultural context feeding into the contextual theatricality and vice versa is an impossible task to get a full view of. Sauter suggests a classic Marx approach:

economy, politics and ideology. The people behind S&H created the organization from artistic inspiration and political will and ability to initiate change, in other words strong ideology. Although not at an economical position to set up the project out of own pocket – still belonging to a part of the society or a ‘class’ in which it was possible to find financial and political support enough to get the ball rolling (that doesn’t mean it was or still is easy!). The project can thereby be said to be fuelled by an ideology that creates a symbolic capital convertible to economic support that enables a materialising on a local level, directly interacting with the local community and aiming at having social and political impact on the lives of the children involved – all the while having a ball.

The opening night of *Jumping for Joy – The Uplifting Plays!*

Teatro Technis was a buzzy beehive on the opening night of *Jumping for Joy – The Uplifting Plays!* People everywhere were running around getting ready in whatever capacity they were there. The children were called early for warm-up with the actors, to get dressed in their self-made, hand painted T- shirts, receive a lecture of what to do and what not to do, all in a mish-mash of serious – playful – nervous - get ready for the big night mode. The fact that they join in with the company is of course a way of connecting them stronger to their individual performers, reminding the performers why they are there, as well as giving the performers a chance to meet each other and the children to bond again before it all kicks off.

It’s very interesting, one thing I love, even when I’m feeling really jaded is arriving at 18:30, as we’re about to, to meet the kids, and to warm up as - this idea that we’re the company although we all work in - they’re all two handers plus the director, they’re all little companies of three plus the play-write, but actually we are this huge company putting on *Jumping for Joy - The Uplifting Plays!* as you say. And I love all meeting and just playing stupid games and seeing how the kids by this stage absolutely take possession of this extraordinary group of adults - of strangers that they’ve been introduced to, and lay claim on them. The first night when we played Zip Zap Boing, of course the kids only ziped or zaped to each other, and then gradually one or two of them ziped or zaped to their cast members. They won’t do it to a stranger, possibly a dramaturg, in fact more usually a dramaturg who they know better, but they will go ‘no they’re my actor, I’m allowed, I’ll zip, I’ll be brave’ because of course they all are so chuffed they have ownership that none of the other kids do, but the other kids have their cast so everyone have

ownership of a couple of adults who become their sort of weird friends.
(Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square, pre show 03.07.09)

This joy that Giles expresses from a volunteer point of view is equally present with the children; a bit of 'Zip Zap Boing' gets body and mind ready, a bit of 'Bunny Bunny' sharpens the focus and then 'The Murder Game'. Kids usually get to play murderers and detectives and they kill off the rest of the company that compete each other at dying in the most gruesome, spectacular manner; all to glowing appreciation - it is a bonding exercise that works.



Another death! Detectives Tom and Peter can't work out who the murderer is.

In the front room teachers, patrons and special guests were gathering for a glass of wine. I managed to pop in to introduce myself in the hope of getting an appointment with some of the teachers, which proved easy, maybe due to the wine on offer, but mostly due to the general excited good will atmosphere. Sitting in their reserved front row seats the kids with ants in their pants observed with surprise as the doors opened to the theatre, people piled in and the rows filled up with people. Shy and excited they

waved to parents, siblings and teachers as they took their seats amongst the more general crowd of thespians and friends. The lights came down and Briing the F chord entered in his white tie jacket, trousers held up by 3 braces (one for every note in his chord) and a top hat with a G- clef on. The show was up and running and 8 quick minutes later Peter had to come down from his throne on the back row to take his bows with Briing and his fellow character Coupana. Peter's eyebrows almost disappeared under his hairline, his eyes rounder than two marbles, he shook with a big grin on his face, it looked like proud delight and surprise with a dash of nervous shyness, an emotional cocktail I will come back to later in the section *Emotional Children* (see Chapter Twelve). The audience responded to Peter's innocent reaction with immense cheering, wolf whistles and raving applause. The other children looked around and couldn't quite believe what they were witnessing. As mentioned in the introduction the fundamental purpose of the project is to boost the self-esteem of the children involved by giving them a public platform for their voices and by providing a personal experience of success (see Chapter One). And what Peter just experienced on that Thursday night in that little theatre was pretty much exactly that. He was the first one up but all of them in turn had the same experience lined up for them. Sophie Boyack describes the consecutive nights as such:

I think there's the quite extraordinary experience for each child which kind of builds as the evening goes on by definition, because the first child can't quite believe; 'What? You mean they're clapping and cheering like this? And that happens to each of them individually and then I think they just sort of go home almost - just a bit punch with the whole thing, almost a bit bewildered. And then they come back the next night and 'is it gonna happen again'? And it does and then by Saturday they're a bit - 'OK, here we go', taking it all in their stride a bit. (Interview Sophie Boyack, coffee shop on patio outside British Library 22.07.09)

As Sophie points out each and every child experiences what Peter did; they all get to see their play and experience it's reception. The actors rise to the occasion, the audience perceives and reacts, the actors pick up on the reception and feel safer and grow bolder, the children come on stage and the audience go crazy for them, the children react and the audience go even more crazy, by which time the performance has long gone turned into an event, the feedback loop spins powerfully and efficaciously and allows the event to happen.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: EFFICACY VS ENTERTAINMENT IN S&H CONTEXT

Schechner through his model the efficacy – entertainment braid, offer properties that belong to two different kinds of events through a list of ‘polar opposites’, as presented in Chapter Eight. Schechner, through the image of the braid, presents the idea that although elements are visible much of the time, they are also hidden behind other elements at times, whilst still very much being part of holding the braid together, creating the pattern. This chapter is an investigation of some of the ‘polar pairs’ in Schechner’s braid, in the context of S&H. As pre warned not all the pairs are included. The pair Performer possessed in trance / Performer knows what s/he’s doing has little relevance in this context. The performers at S&H know what they are doing as much or as little as any actor stepping on to stage after a short rehearsal period.

Likewise the pair Criticism discouraged / Criticism flourishes loses its relevance in this thesis, as the focus lies within the event itself. It’s still worth noting though, as a possible tendency of the organization becoming more known, that the last *Replay* batch of plays, performed the last week of February this year actually got a review in the Guardian with a dice and all (<http://sceneandheard.org/home.html> 20.04.10). *Here, There and Everywhere* would have been the second course; a *Replay* course for some of the kids involved in *Jumping for Joy*. This is great news for the organization for instance in their search for funding, as on this occasion the review ends with Michael Billington’s conclusion: “A heady evening which leaves you wishing that this demonstration of what drama can do for children could be funded and repeated on a national scale.” (Ibid.) Still though, a review could possibly compromise the guarantee of success that lies implanted within the work. Of course the immediate experience of success in the theatre would still be the same for the children, but a newspaper critic slaughtering the same event could give a big blow to it all.

Results – fun

This first pair doesn't oppose strongly in the work of S&H. A through line of joy is percent in all the work that the organization does - as pointed out before in the section *Actors and Their Craft*; one of the things 'expected of the volunteers is a committed seriousness and a serious playfulness' and that really goes for the children as well. That doesn't mean a course with S&H is an easy ride for the children at all, as Sophie Boyack pointed out:

[...] it's not about saying to the child that 'Your right and you're perfect'. It's about saying to the child 'You need to work a bit harder' you know sometimes it's about saying 'You need to try a bit harder, you need to come up with a better idea'. It's about challenging them; it's about pushing them to do the best that they can. So it's not about blanket praise for praises sake. It's about then, at the end of that, being able to say 'Do you know what - you worked really hard and you are succeeding as a result of working hard'. (Interview Sophie Boyack, coffee shop on patio outside British Library 22.07.09)

So while the aim is results, the means is fun. Positive feedback and fun for the children lies as a fundamental building block in this work, as mentioned under point 3 in the Code of Behaviour for Volunteers: "Scene and Heard is a self-esteem boosting project and the children simply cannot receive too much positive feedback." (See Appendix: Code of Behaviour for Volunteers.) Also as Roz Paul said when we had a quick coffee on a bench at St Pancras International an afternoon in February:

Having a good time comes first, but trying from discipline and commitment, jollying the best possible play out of the child. They must always have fun, it must differ from school in that way, but we want them to realise that the success comes from committing to something and seeing it through. (Email correspondence with Roz Paul 23/04/10 is available in a folder on request.)

But the reason the work is done is so the children can experience the feeling of success; the key to their boost of self esteem (see Chapter Thirteen), which is the result S&H are aiming for. The fun wouldn't have happened if it weren't for the fact that the organization was aiming for results. Even though the aim is fun; the fun-means is subordinate to the fun-results and lands the greater emphasis on the efficacy side of the column.

Link to absent Other – only for those there

By defining the *absent Other* as the unknown to the children; the thing that the organization is aiming to introduce them to; the realisation that their imagination is the most important tool they have, it is possible to claim that the ‘materialisation’ of the aim happens through creation of community. It is through the audience as a community they perceive the acknowledgement of their work, and thereby the feeling of success. It is through the immediacy and eventness of theatre that this community manifests and becomes efficacious. The absent Other then becomes the community or even, prior to the event taking place; the idea of the community and the belief in it’s efficacy, because it is in this community that the realisation may happen. It seems people who know the organization come there believing in the efficacy. A rephrasing of this pair in connection to S&H’s work could therefore be (with all due respect to Schechner’s original) Link to community / Individual experience. By interpreting this pair as such, the emphasis is again on the efficacy side of the continuum.

Symbolic time – emphasis now

Symbolic time according to Schechner is...

[...] when the span of activity represents another (longer or shorter) span of clock time. Or when the time is considered differently, as in Christian notions of “the end of time,” the Aborigine “Dreamtime,” or Zen’s goal of the “ever present. Examples: theatre, rituals that reactualize events or abolish time, make-believe play and games. (Schechner, 2003, p. 8)

There isn’t much mileage in claiming symbolic time in these events other than what might turn up in the plays as very temporary story telling devices with general validity for theatre, for instance triggered by the age property of the characters: Coupana the coupon in Peter’s play was only a few days old, but that was already in coupon terms rather old. The event as a whole does not claim any symbolic time aspect at all, and therefore the emphasis is now and entertainment. It does try to create ‘special time’ for the children but in a 100% secular way – this will be commented on later in the section *Elements of Ritual* (see Chapter Twelve).

Audience participates – audience watches

This pair, like the first one, is much more difficult to keep separated and the outcome is dependant on how participation is defined. The audiences in a S&H show are invaluable. As pointed out several times before it is within their response the fulfilment of the overall aim lies; the feeling of success, the boost of self-esteem for the children. It may seem like Schechner by participation means actual getting up and physically taking part in the action – audience moving their physical bodies into the space where otherwise the performers would operate exclusively during the time of the performance; erasing the line between performers and audience completely. This is not the case at all during a S&H performance, and by interpreting participation in that way, the audience would strictly observe. However by allowing the feedback loop into the equation the audience becomes highly participatory. The audience participates through their response to what they are watching; the two cannot be oppositional. Applying the same logic of the conclusion in the first pair; result versus fun, the response is subordinate to the watching, the response wouldn't happen unless they were watching. This is true, however there's a given in the situation: by including the feedback loop under participating the audience has no choice but to participate; as Fischer-Lichte points out by adapting Paul Watzlawick's famous dictum: "you cannot not react to each other" (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 43). One can aim to achieve results without having fun but one cannot watch without giving response. Within the given parameters of this thesis, where the event has been and is investigated through the feedback loop, it is not possible to choose between the two because the one is a prime principal of the phenomenon - it's an impossible opposition. This principal reflects the research positioning closer to Fischer –Lichte, rather than Schechner that was pointed out in Chapter Eight, and by nature it is efficacious.

Audience believes – audience appreciate

The journey from 'confusiasm' to enthusiasm as described in the section *The Innocent First Night in the Audience* (see Chapter Nine) starts as an experience as entertainment, and ends in efficacy, and in Schechners table that move is equivalent to a move from appreciating (or not, but either way relating to the performance with

distance) to believing. In the material from this case study, the only little evidence of a different perception comes from a single word used twice: In the audience questionnaire there were 2 people out of 97 who used the word ‘patronizing’ when answering 2 different questions on 2 different nights. One friend of a volunteer, who had been before said that ‘no’ (s)he wouldn’t like to come back, but then added ‘perhaps if another friend was in it, otherwise no – tonight I’m personally finding it a little patronizing’. An other friend of a volunteer who had not been before said that (s)he would like to come back because it was ‘enjoyable’ and would consider volunteering her –himself because: ‘It’s a project that’s clearly enjoyable and beneficial to those involved. It’s obvious that it’s gonna make a real difference to the lives of the children’. Still, when asked to give a few keywords to describe how (s)he experienced the performance (s)he used the words ‘funny, sweet, slightly patronizing for the children’. The possibility of patronizing will be dealt with in the section *The Danger of Patronizing* (see Chapter Thirteen) but despite her using patronizing as a word to describe the event, she is in no doubt about the effect, which is rather peculiar. 96 people said they would come back and gave very good reasons for wanting to.⁵ It is impossible to quote all of the questionnaires but the following quick word count will give a little impression of some of the most frequently used reasons:

- 43x fun
- 34x great
- 32x funny
- 26x entertaining
- 21x good
- 21x support
- 14x brilliant
- 13x inspiring
- 12x wonderful
- 12x amazing
- 10x creative

⁵ Counting one who said s(h) wouldn’t come back but then answered: ‘Because the professionals make the writing into legit theatre, it was thoroughly entertaining. I wouldn’t have known kids wrote them’ which probably makes this persons ‘no’ a mistake.

- 10x different
- 8x heart-warming
- 6x worth while

On top of this the word ‘experience’ turned up in conjunction with unique, thrilling, wonderful, fresh, hilarious theatrical, one-off and different. Other words used one or more times were constructive, non-ego, encourage, essence of theatre and genuine community. The whole questionnaire is a documentation of a 99% thrilled audience that compete to sing their praises as further this illustrating pick of quotes show:

Question: How many times have you been before and why do you come back?

1 time. I just enjoyed every aspect of it. It’s so good to see the children so proud.

1 time. Because it’s exciting, creative and what all performance should be about – non ego and supportive environment.

6 times. Because it is the best theatre.

Not been before. The creativity of the children, the characters – something new I’ve never seen before – so innocent – so creative.

Question: Would you like to come back another time and if so why?

Yes. It is such a wonderful idea and tremendously constructive for a child in such a grim area.

Yes. It’s a very different type of entertainment. The plays are so imaginative; it’s nice to be taken back to the mind of a child.

Yes. Most delightful, joyful night out – face bursting from laughing! Beautiful project to support the life of these children. Very valuable project.

Yes. I haven’t seen a more honest voice for young kids today. Supportive laughs, rewarding diligence and an inner voice.

Question: Would you consider volunteering for S&H? Why?

Yes. Seeing the children's faces shows how good it must be for their self-esteem knowing that they can give pleasure to an (adult) audience.

Yes. Wonderful experience to be part of such an inspiring environment.

Yes. My head is full of ideas – what can I do?

Question: Please describe tonight's performance with a few key words

Emotional. It's incredible to think that these stories are created by these children and brought to life by such a wonderful group of talented people.

Awestruck delight.

Thoroughly enjoyable, absurdly logical and totally felt.

Toe-curlingly funny, unflinchingly honest, brilliantly surreal, simultaneously heart-warming and heart-breaking, ultimately uplifting.

Question: What for you was the most memorable moment tonight and why?

When the kids came to the front and were glowing.

Hearing the audience absolute delight when the children playwrights took a bow.

The moments of insight into the modern world of the 9-10 year old, especially the weather forecast and the water pistol.

If you've been to the theatre elsewhere – what makes a night at S&H different to your previous experience in the theatre?

The explicit encouragement of/by the audience. Being able to see the writers watch their plays.

I go to the theatre often and rarely experience the same honesty and clarity of emotional thought.

It's a co-operative, inclusive, organic process that celebrates the imagination of the writers – it doesn't happen often in the theatre.

As all the above quotes show; the audience appreciates, but they also believe. 13 of them explicitly express a belief that the project has a direct impact on the lives of the children, and most of the others imply it without saying it directly. With audience answers like ‘valuable’, ‘life learning’, ‘self esteem boost for young people’, ‘great opportunity for young people to express themselves and empower themselves in adult environment’ it’s obvious that it is possible to argue that the event has life changing and possibly liminal elements and that I will return to, but for now - the aim of the organization is to alter how the children perceive themselves, and they do it by holding up a mirror of acknowledgement from the audience. General audience and friends of volunteers will not have preconceived ideas about the individual children, but some might have some generalised ideas about kids in the area. Either way this - making them visible in the community, at least there and then, somehow upgrades their status. Different people interpreted the question about the most memorable moment from the questionnaire differently. Some understood it as ‘which play or character did you enjoy the most’ and answered thereafter, however 34 people picked the children’s bows in general or even a specific child’s bow as their most memorable moment. If more people had understood that they weren’t limited to picking a favourite play or character that number might well have been bigger. It’s quite remarkable that the cherry on the icing for the children also becomes the cherry on the icing for many in the audience. The audience don’t just clap and cheer because the play is over and they feel obliged to because it’s what we do in the theatre, they love to perform this act because it’s so rewarding to see the children’s reactions. The audience, even the new ones, very quickly grasp the concept. Before their eyes, as they do it, they can see the immediate effect their acknowledgement of the children has on them as they take their bows, and as S&H put it “come up that little bit taller”. This makes the audience believe and this belief makes them efficacious.

Collective creativity – individual creativity

S&H from every point of view is a highly collective and collaborative experience. There are little units doing bits that come together in the final product and the organization does it's utmost to keep a sense of togetherness, and a feeling of lifting together for the children. It's by making the volunteers feel good for being there they make them want to come back for more, which in turn is what keeps the organization running; a very high score for an efficacious, collective creativity.

Preliminary, 'contradictory' conclusion

The above tendency is clear; the work of S&H as studied in this thesis, with the given lens, is clearly efficacious. Efficacy and entertainment are as Schechner informs us "not so much opposed to each other; rather they form the poles of a continuum" (Schechner, 2003, p. 130). There are very strong elements of entertainment present, but the mark on the continuum in the end falls on the efficacy side. The intentions - the framing makes it thus. In other words; to which side of the divide on this continuum the mark hits - in other words again; how efficacious a performance ends up being, or indeed how entertaining an efficacy intended performance is - depends on the feedback loop. If the feedback loop doesn't work or somehow weakens, the audience will stop believing and stop participating, there will be no link to a community, the collective creativity will fall apart and the results will be no fun. But interesting, and 'contradictory' enough in terms – that's when, according to this theory, the mark on the continuum would point to 'entertainment'. It's become necessary to dig deeper; to further infuse theory with praxis and praxis with theory; to melt down structure and blur the borders.

CHAPTER TWELVE: THE EFFICACIOUS FEEDBACK LOOP

The existence of the feedback loop, this hard to pin down, immeasurable entity is unquestionable to anyone who has worked with any kind of live performance, and in a phenomenological way probably to anyone who has ever been to a live performance. On a general basis actors will talk about what kind of ‘house’ they have at any given performance, meaning how responsive, how awake, how ‘up for it’ the people ‘out there’ are. Most audience members would lack terminology to talk about it directly, but would register and discuss what effect the performance had on them in terms of mood; happy, sad, bored and so forth. At a S&H show, as pointed out above, acquiring the overall aim of the organization depends on the size, power, strength, speed or capacity of the feedback loop; it’s difficult to find the right words to describe it, as it is so impalpable. The system relies completely on the audience to assure the children experience this sense of success that allows them to have grown that little bit taller when they come up from their bow. And the audience so far has never failed, it seems they instinctively know what’s expected of them and they are immediately up for it.

Elements of ritual

S&H has never given the impression of setting up any ritual and there’s no call for trying to claim that either as Schechner explains, “A performance is called theatre or ritual because of where it is performed, by whom, and under what circumstance” (Schechner, 2003, p. 130). However there is ground to claim, based on all the above material, that a S&H show has ritualistic elements, or to turn to Victor Turner, Schechner’s anthropologist colleague for many years, to claim that a S&H show has *liminoid* elements. As mentioned in the brief introduction to Turner’s terms in Chapter Eight, *liminoid* as a whole seems the term more fitting to an event like a performance by S&H. However it’s tempting to give a little *-oid* investigation to the

three stages of a rite of passage, central to their examination of the *liminal* phenomenon that the two describes, with a *Playmaking One* course in mind.⁶ The separation phase in a rite of passage according to Van Gennep and Turner amongst other things...

[...] clearly demarcates symbolic space and time from profane and secular time [...] there must be in addition a rite that changes the *quality* of time [...]. It includes symbolic behaviour – especially reversal or inversion of things, relationships and processes secular – which represents the detachment of the ritual subjects. (Turner, 1982, p. 24)

Van Gennep, and Turner in turn, point at how initiation rites, as an example, can last for a long period, taking the novices away from their family and familiar society, depriving them of – or changing their relationship with things like clothes, food and names, often not even distinguishing them from animals. Sometimes the rite gives them a special status all the while they're in the second, transitional phase - outside the normative social structure, giving them a "special kind of freedom, a "sacred power" of the meek, weak and humble" (Turner, 1982, p. 26). "[...] the novices are induced to think, and think hard, about cultural experiences they had hitherto taken for granted. The novices are taught that they did not know what they thought they knew." (Turner, 1982, p. 42) After this period of *limen* (latin for threshold) they return to be reincorporated into society, a phase that "includes symbolic phenomena and action which represent the return of the subjects to their new, relatively stable, well-defined position in the total society." (Turner, 1982, p. 24)

The children of Somers Town do not belong to a tribe, they come from as many cultural backgrounds as they are in numbers, but they do live in the same area, and they do go to the same schools, and they share a daily life in this troubled area. A *Playmaking One* course tries to offer something to the children that they have never experienced before, something other than their daily life, and something out of the ordinary. When asking Roz Paul what she felt was the most important part of her job she said that she wanted the children to grasp the theatrical concepts and to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations. She explained how just by being in the same

⁶ the "-oid" here derives from Greek-eidos, a form, shape; and means "like, resembling"; "liminoid" *resembles* without being identical with "liminal" (Turner, 1982, p.32)

room as, and being listened to by charismatic adults that play with them, shows the children that there are other ways of being and thinking. Teachers and parents are always right, she said, whilst actors can make absolute idiots of them selves without blinking, and it helps the children relax and find their own way. So without creating a full liminal setting like in an ancient initiation rite, the aim is to give the children an experience that might make them reconsider their outlook on life, which might teach them that 'they did not know what they thought they knew'. The time they spend with the adults at S&H is meant to be special for each and every child. All the one-on-one attention from adults, that have set aside the time especially to be with them, is a rare treat to them all. The aim is therefore giving very special 'quality' of time to the children, although not in a sacred way, and not in any way taking them away from their families for more than a few hours at a time. Highly secular in it's character this 'quality' time involve turning up side down some norms for the children; adults playing games like there was no tomorrow, helping them realise that 'wrong' is ok and sometimes brilliant because it makes things all the more fun, and it sometimes makes room for thoughts and solutions that otherwise wouldn't have happened. This behavior from the grown ups could be read as 'symbolic behaviour' – aiming at 'reversing' or 'inverting' things and relationships for the children, which in turn - in this Turner perspective 'represents the detachment of the ritual subjects'. They could never be said to enter a full liminal phase, so in Van Gennep's three stages they, through the course, experience a very mild version of a mix between the first and second face; separation and transition. The performances could then be read as a third phase; reincorporation, where the work created by their own imagination, based on what they have learned within this quality time, is appreciated, and honored by a whole group of grown ups representing the society. Not reincorporation because they've been away for a long time, but because they hopefully have had some experiences that have transported them to a slightly different place in life. Milly Sanderson when talking about her teenage son David, who's done 4 courses with S&H, and came to see *Jumping for Joy* because his younger brother was one of the writers, is in no doubt that his contact with S&H has had a strong impact on him on a 'personal psychological' level (see Chapter Eight). Possibly even overriding some of the 'the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations' (also see Chapter Eight) of the society, that might not have been imposed deliberately on him or any of the other children, but that

somehow they to a certain extent still have become the victims of.

[...] like I said earlier teenager, 16 you know, and I went in there and, cause Kate's left now, I brought some flowers in, and I said to David 'Could you give those to Kate?' and he did - do you know what I mean. Like if it was my bloomin aunt or something he'd go 'No, you do it'. He really - I'm trying to think what I'm trying to say here is that it's given him - they've helped him, not just his confidence; it's like to be a young man. (Interview on phone Milly Sanderson 17.07.09)

Milly here doesn't only describes a young man who has been 'reincorporated' temporarily during the events when he was in focus as a playwright, but a young man who actually has acquired a 'permanent social status within a community' as was Van Genneps explained aim with the liminal rituals (see Chapter Eight).

The creation of community

In this meeting between children and grown ups, locals and professionals at Teatro Technis there is a definite feeling of community that emerges. A friend of a volunteer who had never been to a S&H show gave the following reason for wanting to come back another time: "I was surprised by quality + entertainment value of it. Also the genuine community feel to it, and it being free contributes to that feeling that it's a more sincere interaction about the 'art' of creation and community interaction rather than a commercial transaction of paid, normal theatre" To investigate the sense of community further it's time to revisit some of Fischer-Lichte and Max Hermann's theory introduced early on. As pointed out Fischer-Lichte regards sensations and emotions as meanings and thereby states of consciousness manifested as physical articulations that are transmittable to others without having been "translated" into words (see Chapter Eight, page 49-50). As she puts it herself "If 'effect' is described as the interference into the process of the feedback loop's self organization, it follows that meanings can be defined as effects as long as they impact on the feedback loop." (Erica Fischer- Lichte, 2008, p. 151-152) (Also see page 49-50.) This above recognition of sensations and emotions as producers and carriers of meaning is the theoretical account of what she calls 'embodied minds'. These embodied minds in an event, whether as representatives of audience or performers individually always contribute with meanings, not only through the audible and visible signs like

clapping, laughing and crying, but through all physically articulated emotions, although never individually controlling the energy dynamic or outcome of it. Through personal experience and through all interviews and unofficial chats about S&H, one thing is crystal clear: This work brings out strong emotions and according to the above that should bring out a strong expression of meaning. It would therefore be feasible to claim that the reason why the feedback loop in S&H's work is so powerful is a natural consequence of the common feeling that this work is very meaningful.

Emotions

The emotional aspect is highly potent in the work of S&H, but scientifically emotions are slippery. Both the organic process and the following subjective understanding and linguistic expression of them as phenomenon are rather unreliable. The lack of accessibility other than through introspection; what of course makes them intriguingly interesting, is what hinders them in being scientifically reliable sources of information. However not attempting to describe them and include them also seems deceiving since they are so important in the experience individually and collectively and they also seem to be the most important nutrition for the feedback loop.

Emotional children

Veteran volunteer actor and director Giles Taylor observed one of the children very closely on the opening night and described him as follows:

There was a lovely - I don't know what the boys name is, one of the Asian lads last night, when everyone stood up - when the audience stood up at the end, and they were all, all 9 kids were lined up - he suddenly had this extraordinary innocent response to that elation, and he scrunched up his face and his shoulders went up and he beamed a smile with his eyes closed, and shuddered and I, because I was standing in the corner, and I went 'oh god' - that was a sort of visceral affirmation of his joy then, it was wonderful, and that's the final cherry on the cake of course, as they say in the mission statement; to give them a public experience of success. (Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square, pre show 03.07.09)

This well formulated description of the physical expression of this boys emotional experience is what in turn triggers the grown ups...

Emotional audience

The previously discussed question ‘What for you was the most memorable moment tonight and why?’ (see Chapter Eleven) from the audience questionnaire was interpreted differently by the different members the audience. Again, in hindsight I wish I had specified this question more clearly, but the result is still quite poignant. The children’s bows, particularly on the first night are very special. This emotional moment for the kids becomes such an emotional moment for the audience as well. The grown up audience’s identification of the children’s joy becomes a source of overwhelming emotions on both parts that it’s very hard to describe. Fischer –Lichte’s auto poetic feedback loop is in her work focused on the time when a performance actually is still running, but that doesn’t mean it stops when the performance is over, it just takes on a different form. The actors perform whilst the children sit in their playwright’s chair. The actors take a bow and then call their child writer to the stage. The child first takes a bow together with their actor, holding their hands, then step forward and take three bows on their own; one to each side of the audience. All the while this little ceremony is rewarded with a cascade of praise. The reaction from the audience always catches the children by surprise, and it’s impossible not to get emotionally charged by their reactions, which then encourages the audience to cheer even more. Through the investigation of Sauter’s ‘theatrical playing’ in the perspective of Bentley’s ABC formula (see Chapter Ten) it was pointed out that there, in a S&H event is, a heightened awareness between A (the actor) and C (the spectator) on behalf of B (the character) that increases the eventness of the S&H event. But there is another element that also raises the stakes in this triangle and to see that we have to return to Fischer-Lichte’s point of departure - Max Hermann who said: “the “creative” activity of the audience resulted from a “secret empathy, a shadowy reconstruction of the actors’ performance which is experienced not so much visually as through *physical sensation* (author’s emphasis).” (Erika Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 35.) In a S&H event this secret empathy doesn’t only run as a shadowy reconstruction from C to A, but also from grown up C to child C as well as from A to child C. It is a secret empathy through a shadowy reconstruction of ourselves as children. It’s a loop of that keeps itself alive feeding on the emotions that organically infuse the people and the room based on our common experience of having been children. Actor Ellie Harley had some thoughts about what inner domain this work

reaches in us as human beings that she shared in the in the pub after a performance, and later in an email:

I think one of the reasons we enjoy Scene and Heard as an audience is that it speaks to the inner child inside us. I don't think this is a conscious thing but works on a deeper level. Growing up adds layers of new 'us' and the voice of our inner child becomes harder to hear. Scene and Heard speaks straight to this little us and indulges all the grown up us's on the way. We can't help but really enjoy Shabalabdingdong Avenue (the haditat of Brrring in *Missing Love* by Peter – my note) because it's what we all want to say. As we grow older we become more self-conscious in trying to express our feelings about things around us and that affect us. The evening of Scene and Heard plays allow a release. We laugh at our vulnerability and the struggle to understand this crazy world we are living in. (Email correspondence with Ellie Harley 29/09/10 is available in a folder on request)

It may seem like the production of meaning in this ball of joy; the sense that this matters, this makes a difference, this changes things, this has consequences for the children - ultimately the liminal experience is what creates the community. It is a moment when it doesn't matter who you are, where you come from, what coloured skin you have or what you had for dinner.

The Moment of Enchantment in praxis

Fischer-Lichte describes this moment as the moment when a performance, by the power of the feedback loop, has turned into an event and 'opens the possibility of a deeper understanding of our common being in the world' (see Chapter Eight). This moment seems to be related to what Turner calls *communitas* - with it's feature, coined by Cikszenmihalyi and MacAloon, and adapted by Turner, namely *flow*. Flow amongst other things describes a state of being, a condition that merges action and awareness, and thereby focuses the attention without a sense of ego, self-judgment and where skills are "matched to the demand" (Turner, 1982, p. 57). Turner points out that flow is a condition that "is experienced within an individual, while *communitas* at its inception is evidently between or among individuals" (Turner, 1982, p. 58). Experiencing *communitas* and experiencing moments of enchantment are thus both phenomenon based on every**body's** togetherness in the event. Adding all these elements together could suggest that: During a S&H show an individual enters the

condition of flow. The condition flow ‘embodies the mind’, transmitting meaning through physically articulated emotional reactions that in turn are sensationally picked up by fellow audience members and performers – who are going through the same process – fed by the feedback loop. Visually this could be described as filling the gaps between us, joining us together. Turner talks about liquefying structure - another helpful illustrating concept:

“Flow” for me is already in the domain of what I have called “structure,” *communitas* is always prestructural, even though those who participate in it have been saturated in structure – being human – since they were infants. But “flow” for me seems to be one of the ways in which “structure” may be transformed or “liquefied”. (Turner, 1982, p. 58)

Translating Turner’s notion - we are born in flow, in a prestructural condition, but in our Western, industrialized world gradually enter structure, stiffen in our being, lose our fluidity and more and more gain our rigid individuality as grown ups. It is unlikely that a majority of the audience through experiencing such moments come to an *intellectual* understanding of ‘our common being in the world’. But by considering sensations and emotions as meaning, as Fischer-Lichte already has suggested, we can assume that most, if not all members of a S&H show during the course of an evening at Teatro Technis have been, in moments, ‘enchanted’, ‘liquefied’ and ‘melted’ into a unity. This feeling of unity might have introduced them to, or brought them back to a feeling of a common being in the world. Whether we articulate it as getting in touch with our ‘inner self’, or our ‘inner child’, or experiencing ‘moments of enchantment’ or the ‘Essential We’, there can be no doubt that here is a phenomenon, provoked by a theatrical setting, that reaches beyond our daily life and puts us in touch with a side of our self, or a layer of our self that’s rare to experience while running down Oxford Street or Karl Johan on the way to somewhat. An experience at a S&H event seems to have qualities that can be compared to experiences in a ritual setting; liminal experiences. But the kind of event it is; aesthetic and secular with a socio-political under current rather places it within Turner’s liminoid world.

Healing plays

Darren O'Donnell in his book *Social Acupuncture A Guide to Suicide, Performance and Utopia* (2006) describes the philosophy behind traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture in the following manner:

Acupuncture is used to break system-wide holding patterns that are compromising the function of nervous, muscular, vascular, organ and psychological systems – these never viewed separately but always in totality. And just as chains or archipelagos of tension link psyche and soma across disparate parts of the body, the elements of the social body are intertwined. (O'Donnell, 2006, p. 48)

Giving the different agents of a S&H project a diagnosis could have been an entertaining prospect; a rheumatic council in a hyperactive city with some disillusioned actors performing plays written by asthmatic children for a burnt out audience is a vivid, if rather exaggerated picture. However the events that take place do seem to have an effect that loosen up some tension in a very healthy, holistic way: “small interventions at key junctures should affect larger organs, in turn contributing to **feedback loops** (my emphasis) that can amplify and affect the distribution of energy resources.” (O'Donnell, 2006, p. 49) S&H offer a space for people to meet that otherwise often would be estranged to each other in classic patterns; old-young, north-south, east-west, posh-poor, upstairs-downstairs and different ethnic origin, coloured skin and cultural backgrounds. This work does loosen up muscles, tendons and nervous systems on both an individual - and a community level, as a result of all the new relations created throughout the course, and through the power of the feedback loop in the events. In a greater picture, tied in with the ‘moments of enchantment’ - the experiences, and possible further consequences can be viewed in a political way. Turner points out that liminoid phenomenon often are “parts of social critique and even revolutionary manifestos” (Turner, 1982, p. 54-55). People with political interest and high social awareness might find the events at S&H rewarding in that aspect. The altruistic aspect of the *communitas* as described through Martin Buber's notion of the *Essential We* (see Chapter Eight) folds in perfectly in that perspective. It's not easy to find local, and hands on ways of contributing to social and political change, and at the same time be well entertained. S&H offer a way of contributing to specific children, children you actually can meet, greet and cheer on,

whilst seeing the effect of your own contribution to them - there and then. All without it costing a penny, unless you want it to. Referring to some performances with actual physical role-reversal Fischer-Lichte points out that they “constituted a temporary social reality.” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 55) Even with all role reversal being non-physical during a S&H event, the principal still applies:

These short-lived theatrical communities of actors and spectators are particularly relevant for an aesthetics of the performative. First they clearly highlight the fusion of the aesthetic and the social. The community is based on aesthetics principles but its members experience it as social reality.⁷ Second [...] they occur due to the specific turns that the autopoietic feedback loop takes. (Ibid.)

The S&H community as such arises out of this fusion of aesthetic components and specific socio-political realities and by nature has a holistic, unifying, healing effect on the people present through its social acupuncture and liminal properties.

The relational

S&H have made it into an art; they have upgraded the performance to an event and in turn turned the event into a work of art, the aesthetics of S&H is as such relational. The components in the aesthetic regime can be investigated in detail in classic performance analytical ways, but it is the emphasis on the relational aspect that makes it different, that makes it efficacious and that allows everybody present to leave the theatre that ‘little bit taller’ having experienced the healing *Transformative Power of Performance* (Erica Fischer-Lichte, 2008). The transformative, healing power of the event in S&H ‘s work is relational.

⁷ It probably goes without saying that in this setting believing in the ‘reality’ refers to the experience of community rather than for instance the fictional love story between the solar system and the CCTV camera or Hong Kong fighting for her friends life.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE EFFECTS OF THE SOCIAL ACCUPUNCTURE

CHILDREN

The obvious benefits:

Bettered literacy, improved vocabulary, and knowledge of the theatrical conventions and building blocks of a play, which in turn offers the ability as well as possible inspiration to write. Theses are things that for some of these children don't come easy, as proud mother Milly said:

They've given him something that not every child have and they've given him the belief that he can do things, and that he is good at doing it, you know. David's dyslexic you see. Yeah David never had much confidence in things like that and he did it, and I think that helped him you know for GCSE English, you know. I never thought the boy would do it, but he did, and you know all these little things. And he has also had a fantastic, you know alternative education as well, so I mean they've brought out the best in him - maybe that's what I'm trying to say. (Interview on phone Milly Sanderson 17.07.09)

Something to tell and talk about

Having had these experiences that the children of S&H have they return to their families and school friends with stories to tell and the guts to tell them. Regular volunteer David Cottis wrote down one of his favourite S&H moments in my notebook, clearly a moment he would never forget. It was something a girl named Abi who had been to a course in 2002 had said: "What S&H does is to tell to the children that what they have to say is worth listening to - pause - and I wish someone had said that to me when I was ten."

A chance to say something that's difficult to say

Teacher Dave in the interview told of his slightly 'rocky relationship' with Uta from his class, something that seemed to have been on his mind, leaving him a bit unsure about where their relationship stood. He addressed this in the interview because he felt that Uta had addressed it in her play:

[...] and I got a bit big headed because I was named as a character in Uta's play; Dave the Solar System. [...] Yeah, and you just kind of go - you pretend that you don't care, but actually it's nice [...] the fact that she name dropped me shows that she does like me - not that it's about being liked but...
(Interview Ben Judge and Dave Pritchard, after school, schoolyard Edith Neville Primary School 09.07.09)

A place to tell it

Just like with Uta and Dave, Talia seemed to have something on her mind that may otherwise have been difficult to say directly to her parents or the rest of the world; the issue of her parents wanting her to wear geeky clothes, a conflict well known across generations and cultures, possibly in her case heightened by religion (she wore a hijab most of the time). Early on in the section *Smug and Worthy?* (see Chapter Three) the theme was touched upon: exercising their voices in a democratic society is something not a lot of these children have much experience with, and again as pointed out by teacher Dave: "It's not just a language thing, it's maybe some of the lives that they live, actually expressing your emotions just isn't usually the done thing, so it must be quite difficult to do so." On a continued note, not so assured Dave also said:

A lot of the families won't be expecting their child to do anything else but get married possibly, and they might see it as an interesting aside, but I don't think they would see it as something that's gonna change their child's life - even though it might do, and they might not realise. (Interview Ben Judge and Dave Pritchard, after school, schoolyard Edith Neville Primary School 09.07.09)

Still the platform S&H offer for the children to speak up - in a written way, is an instrument where, whether they are aware of it or not, they can train their voices, well wrapped up in the disguise of a story.

Realising themselves that they can do things in life if they want to

Raising aspirations through meeting grown ups that show them that there are different ways to be, think, play and work and if they work hard at it they can do great things, with a little help from their friends. Mother Milly again pointed out: “I mean anyone can show them that they’re not reaching their potential or that they can reach this, but to actually get the child to believe that they can do it themselves, there’s a really big - it’s a tall order.” (Interview on phone Milly Sanderson 17.07.09) These aspirations hopefully come as a consequence of the experience of success, as mentioned in the section *Results – Fun* (see Chapter Eleven).

Life skills – social skills

Whether it’s a teenage boy with his trousers back to front daring to give flowers to a woman on full public display, while working his way around the room, talking to people like it was the most natural thing in the world. Or a shy Bangladeshi girl that dares to get up in front of the others miming that she’s brushing her teeth. Or any of them sitting face to face interviewing two actors they’ve only just met – it all adds up, it gives them the feeling of being taken seriously, which in turn gives the feeling of mastering a situation; it gives them life skills and social skills.

Family relations

Zahin is according to his sister Galal, the quietest of 8 siblings. She talked about the change in her brother since he came to S&H in the following manner:

[...] usually when the siblings argue he would just want to sit back and just forget about it. Now he would want to respond properly and in a clear, in a very nice way, not in a nasty way, but he’ll want to respond and say his bit and then let it go. (Interview Galal, S&H office, Teatro Technis, post show 03.07.09)

Also single parent Milly pointed out a change in family life after her second son Barry came to S&H:

Yeah and actually it brought him and his brother that little bit closer. Because there's a big age difference - 6 years, they haven't really got much in common, but they now have S&H in common [...] It's done lots of things with the relationship and the dynamics between Barry and David, I think. (Interview on phone Milly Sanderson 17.07.09)

Self-esteem – confidence

The ultimate goal, the overall aim, the final cherry on the icing, the thing that all that fun is working towards - the boost of self-esteem. Some of the children have an obvious growing self-esteem throughout the course, some of it just naturally because they get to know each other and feel more comfortable in each other's company, but a lot of it also from mastering the exercises brought on by the course. But no matter how far they've stretched throughout the course - they have no idea what's about to hit them when the lights go down after the first play on the opening night – the power of the feedback loop at full force does wonders for their self esteem.

THEATRE PROFESSIONALS

Professional Networking

As in other performing arts building a professional network is of crucial importance to ones attractiveness as an artist and S&H offers an opportunity to work with others from all walks of the business. Actors have been approached for other work on several occasions based on having been seen at a show, so it can be very fruitful. Also through the years S&H have build up an impressive group of patrons and honorary patrons that on a regular basis come in to see a show, throwing a bit of glamour into the mix, giving the actors something to aspire to them selves - and as with every show you never know who's in watching tonight.

Professional development

A terrific chance to further develop acting skills. Where else does one get the chance to play a fairground, a universe or a posh toilet? The blow-away-nature of the characters that comes from the ban of human characters in the writing creates a unique character index that can be both scary and thrilling and tickle the imagination of actors as much as it initially did the authors. It's challenging but also highly rewarding to tackle these little scripts with their often rather big ideas as previously described by Giles Taylor in the section *Actors and Their Craft* (see Chapter Seven).

A home for the homeless

As nomadic beings both geographically and work wise actors are often rootless. S&H is an organization they can come back to, in new constellations every time, but still within a frame that is familiar and with a very welcoming attitude. The 'Hope and Anchor' being the greenroom where all experiences are shared and stories told. This 'home' also involves a feeling of shared purpose with great consequences.

Making friends with some children

The same nomadic living conditions do not go very well with conventional family life. Making friends with some children, playing softball and helping them do the best they can is for some a great way of exercising some grown-up to child time and for some to fill a gap in their lives that otherwise might have been filled by own children. For others again, whom do have children themselves S&H might offer a return to the basics or as first time volunteer actor Hatti Ladbury (Wilma Weather, the weather forecast from *Weather Controle* by Talia), mother of Lucy formulated it:

H: ...I think something about having Lucy has sharpened my focus a little bit.

S: Focus on?

H: Focus on what's important in theatre and what jobs are worth doing and what jobs aren't.

(Interview Hatti Ladbury, kitchen Teatro Technis, during first half 04.07.09)

Feeling that the work matters

Again as pointed out before actors do not always feel that their work matters. A job at S&H can offer a discovery or revisit to the feeling that it does, that their craft can be used to help change the perspective and even the lives of some children. A disillusioned theatre worker may, through the work, reconnect with the reason they chose the work path they did in the first place.

Feeling that the work is appreciated

The audience response of course spills over on the actors as well; the feedback loop as such has no less impact on the performers and their associated theatre workers. S&H is as well an employee that strives to take care of their volunteers in a way that emphasize this. The organization is well aware of the somewhat hostile environment that freelance actors operate in and deliberately try to create something else.

AUDIENCE

The feeling of a community

The feeling of community, much stronger in a S&H event than in many other theatrical events available on the London scene, seem to have an immediate holistic positive effect on the audience – the social acupuncture effect. The inclusive nature, emergence of collective creativity, and possible connection with something human ‘original’ on a personal as well as a collective level, accounts for the celebratory nature of the event.

Honouring the children

Being allowed to partake in celebrating the children in such a direct manner is, for someone who’s a bit jaded from demanding practical daily life and or urban estate, a

fine experience. When the child in question at the same time is one's own, the experience is probably even more rewarding. An evening at The Hope and Anchor Greg Haiste (Serial Killer – a scorpion from *The Poison in the Plan* by Zahin) wrote down his favourite story in my notebook, from his years as a devoted S&H volunteer. It goes as follows: A father said to me: "I'd be proud of this boy if he wasn't my son, but he IS my son and I AM proud of him." (Smiling brimful of happiness.)

Recognising our inner child

As Ellie Harley pointed out, and many with her in more informal ways, the recognition of our inner child affects anyone still capable of remembering. Sophie Boyack also touched upon the subject:

I think to see, there's something about seeing adults say a child's words somehow that make you think 'Gosh, I could - that you realise how close you are, I think there's something about the child-adult thing that makes you realise how close we are to children and yet how far we've come away from them. (Interview Sophie Boyack, coffee shop on patio outside British Library 22.07.09)

Earlier on S&H has been placed within Turner's concept of Liminoid and not Liminal phenomenon, but it seems again tempting to revisit one of his Liminal criteria in a second 'oid' investigation. As written in Chapter Eight, Liminal by Turner's definition are phenomena amongst other things "integrated into the a total social process [...]. They reflect, on probing the history of the group, i.e., its collective experience, over time." (Turner, 1982, p. 54.) It's been pointed out in several ways above that the group present during a S&H event has little common history, particularly if 'over time' is interpreted as through generations. However, if 'over time' is interpreted as the life span limited by the memory of the people present, there are some commonalities shared by all humans. The experience of being born naked from her or his mother's womb is highly likely to be everyone's. And as a consequence everyone has also been a child, although childhood will have differed radically from one person to the next. In other words; during a S&H event one of the commonalities of the group - all be it not a simultaneous, collective experience as such - is a shared experience of having been a child, which brings us back to Turner's

description of us being born in flow as discussed in the section *The Moment of Enchantment in Praxis* (see Chapter Twelve). This ‘melt down’ of grown up, rigid structure, this setting aside of ego needs, and return to an *Essential We* seems to be triggered first and foremost by the presence of the children, and then enhanced further by the alienation that happens in the meeting between the children’s words and the grown ups’ voice. The ‘space’ that this alienation creates, contradictory in terms, seems to bring the audience closer to the children present and at the same time closer to what has been referred to as our inner child.



Beatrice getting ready for the closing night party and as I ask her how it felt she said “It made me feel like Shakepeare!”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: REVERSING THE LOOP

Some parents don't get it

And who can blame them? In this white, middleclass, Western educated and minded little world of 90% 'smug and worthy posh people' there are things to be aware of and try to take care of when it comes to intercultural togetherness, and S&H as an organization are aware:

I mean I'm very, very aware, certainly when we set up, we were perfectly aware, you know that we seemed like, you know they used to call us the 'Drama Ladies' and we seemed like two posh women that had sort of walked in and 'You know what you all need?' and there is an element of that - and I don't think we can get away from that. But I think that's the same the world over, and that's been the same since the year dot, you know however you want to describe it - if you want to describe it as class or education, but people have always turned around and 'helped' in inverted commas other people by saying 'I think I know how I can help you' so in a sense it's no radically different from, quite frankly someone being a doctor and saying 'I know how I can mend you', it's the same sort of principle. (Interview Sophie Boyack, coffee shop on patio outside British Library 22.07.09)

And also S&H do try to counter it. Finding more volunteers that reflect the ethnicity of the children who partake is the main plan of action, which does have a hands-on impact on the work.

The ethnicity is a huge issue for us, and continues to be and we would - we are desperate to recruit more actors, but they're few and far between in the profession as it is and [...] they work a lot, but even - even there's something more than that, and I can't - and this is all just me theorizing, but I don't know whether it's a cultural thing as well, whether it's a sort of - the culture of volunteering isn't as strong. [...] I've, you know I've tried various things. Don's (Don Gilet - my note) brought other black actors to see it. I've been to meet other black - I mean at a point I was actually targeting saying - almost saying 'You're black, let me come and meet you', sort of high profile black actors. All made the right noises, but you know. (Ibid.)

In *Jumping for Joy* the born and bred in London actor David Ahmed (P.C. Scavage, a private detective hyena from Tom's play *The Upside Down Friend*) did draw extra

attention from the Asian kids on the course due to his surname and obvious Asian family background. The kids, particularly the boys took more interest in him than anyone else, asking where he came from, apart from Wimbledon. He seemed to be the ultimate proof that it is possible to do things out of family expectations. But there are cultural challenges on other levels too. For instance the breach of contract before the writing weekend is likely to have had some root in a difference in cultural understanding and value guidelines. Another example happened during the final show on Sunday afternoon. The performance was well into the second half with a terrific feedback loop spinning its energy to every corner of the room, feeding on far more confident children than the opening night - taking trophy bows at the end of their plays. With only two plays to go a tall, dark man with strong physical presence got up of his chair from the back, flanked by two women in black niqabs. They walked over to the row of children, took one gently, but firmly by the neck and walked towards the door. It was like a cold and misty fog poured into the room and froze the atmosphere; in the dimmed blue scene-change light the whole thing seemed a bit scary. Roz, who sat by the door got up and confronted the little delegation, and as she phrased it afterwards she 'scared them back to their seats with her impressive physical presence' Roz stretches about 154 cm above ground. The dad had claimed his son was tired and needed to go home, while Roz had argued that she thought he looked fine and that she assumed he wanted to take his final bow with the other children. Meanwhile the boy kept his mouth shut and looked timid. The dad's behaviour became a perfect example of a negative contribution to the feedback loop that was so strong that it in the moment killed every positive contribution from the collective audience, almost reversing it. Thankfully the S&H audience are so assured about their own intentions and role in this setting, that a few seconds later when the next play started it was all gone like a fart in the wind; the next child and her story was in focus and was the most important thing in the room. Assured that this boy loved every minute of his time with S&H it's impossible not to think that his dad's behaviour must have affected him to a certain degree, that it would have been a killjoy to experience that his dad didn't appreciate the experience, and even failed to pretend that he did enough to stay until the end.

The danger of patronizing

In the section *Audience Believes – Audience Appreciates* (see Chapter Eleven) it was mentioned that 2 people on two different occasions used the word patronizing to describe what was going on during the event. It, coming from the written questionnaires, is not possible to probe further in their individual meanings of it. The double meaning of the word is interesting in this context as S&H is so dependent on the generous patronizing of their patrons. However, in this context, there is no doubt that the word has been used in the negative sense; with a condescending air. Somehow the two individuals must have felt that there was an element of superiority and inferiority. When I told her about it Sophie Boyack didn't agree to the choice of word, but had thoughts about where it came from:

Yes, no - I think it's an interesting word because I think that there are several things that you could level at it, I don't think it's patronizing. I think that sometimes you could argue that we are laughing at the children, and that - I don't ever think it's done maliciously; it's all done with love and humor. But it's difficult not to do sometimes, there have certainly been moments over the years when I have thought 'Oh gosh, I wish the audience wouldn't laugh at that but they - you can't stop them. So I wouldn't say that was patronizing myself [...] But certainly if that was our intention then that would be a terrible thing, but it in no way is, and now I think most of the time we're laughing with the children. The children try to be funny though; they do try to be funny. [...] and I think sometimes we underestimate their comprehension of what's going on. But I think that must be where that's coming from. (Interview Sophie Boyack, coffee shop on patio outside British Library 22.07.09)

Following close in Sophie's footsteps, Hatti Ladbury also shared a concern on the matter in a concrete example:

I remember there was one line in the anniversary, and not at all how it was handled, but how the audience responded to it, very briefly and very funny. It was in a play where one lady was playing a fun-fair and she was fantastic, and the whole play was fantastic, but she had a line, she was a single mum and she was going to a night club or a disco or something and the line was something, about [...] 'I'm gonna go clubbing to get my daughter a new dad' and this very large white middle class audience bellowed with laughter, and I felt very funny about that, and I thought 'no no no, that child had written that in all sincerity and that's not funny, and it's not to say his mum is a tart or a slapper and you know I felt like people were laughing at that rather than because it's just a warm heart felt funny line, you know so I suppose you've got to, I suppose you got to keep an eye out for that. (Interview Hatti Ladbury, kitchen Teatro Technis, during first half 04.07.09)

Both of these statements verify a concern for the welfare of the children, an awareness that too much champagne and ‘Bugger the children, tonight was for us’ - attitude in the audience can quickly compromise the overall aims of the organization. However there is also another way of explaining the 2 patronizing statements. As pointed out in Chapter Eight, Erica Fischer-Lichte investigates the subject-object role reversal in performance as a base for the creation of a community of co-subjects and points out that:

Role reversal thus can be understood as interplay of disempowerment and empowerment which applies to both artistes and spectators. The artistes relinquish their own powerful positions as the performance’s sole creators; they agree to share – to varying degree of course - their authorship and authority with the audience. However that requires a prior empowerment of the actors and disempowerment of the audience; the artists force new behavior patterns on to the audience, often plunge them into crisis, thus denying the spectator the position of distanced, uninvolved observers. (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 50)

The above-described process doesn’t quite correspond with what goes on during a S&H event, however the outcome of it could be understood as the same. Fischer-Lichte still describes processes during the performance itself where the artists as part of the show, as part of what they want to convey with the performance are challenging the traditional subject-object / performer-spectator roles. And again a S&H performance doesn’t do so, however a S&H event might. This investigation, as pointed out before, takes into account on an equally important level what goes on in between the plays; the performer’s and children’s curtain calls and bows. An audience member is unlikely to be plunged into a crisis by a performer, but possibly by their fellow audience members and their spontaneous outburst of *awestruck delight*. The audiences take full charge of the curtain call in a way that could possibly be experienced by an individual as a plunge into a crisis brought on by their co-spectators through something that could be perceived as deprivation of ‘the position of distanced, uninvolved observers’. Someone not quite ready to enter a *communitas* like that, so ecstatic in it’s being, might perceive the whole thing as patronizing not to the children but to them selves. Their reservation could be read as a refusal to surrender to the enthusiasm of the rest of the audience, a refusal to enter the *liminal*

experience. As Turner points out: “Liminality is, of course, an ambiguous state, for social structure, while it inhibits full social satisfaction, gives a measure of finiteness and security; liminality may be for many the acme of insecurity [...]” (Turner, 1982, p. 46). And allowing the proof to be in the pudding – the children do try to be funny; here’s a final story from Giles Taylor:

That’s the other thing that amazes me, they’re always delightful, always hilarious, but occasionally you are gob smacked by what a child has come up with. My favorite, I always site is a very funny play by a little Turkish 9 year old boy called Jem, I think he was called, and he wrote a very funny play full of real gags. I mean sort of real (drum gag sound) gags between, I think I remember rightly; a depressed Mafia frog and a Northern fly who had to get to doctor school, but only had a day to live, and it was really funny and the audience was laughing it up and of course he loved watching it because he knew he had written jokes. And then suddenly the frog said: ‘The trouble with me is that I’ve got no soul’ And we all went ‘Oh’. To which the fly said – gag: ‘What do you mean, the bottom of your shoe?’ And everyone laughed and he went, gob smackingly: ‘No your souls is something inside of yourself what makes you what you are’. And it still makes me a bit teary, it’s the most profound description, non religious description of the soul I have ever heard, with that slightly skewed grammar, brilliant, absolutely extraordinary, and it moves me to this day, and that was 7 years ago or something, you know extraordinary. But that happens, you know the way one can invest in 8 minutes in a relationship and be moved by it. (Interview Giles Taylor, Oakley Square, pre show 03.07.09)

So with children who do want to be funny, who do try to make the grown ups laugh, and with grown ups ready and willing to be entertained there is a risk - there is a danger of reactions that could by some be perceived as patronizing. S&H are guilty of exposing the children to this grown up audience that they cannot guarantee will not laugh at sincerely intended moments from the children, but there has never been any intended condescendence, any patronizing or as Sophie said; certainly no malicious intentions in their work. There is a danger of moments where the laughter is at rather than with, but the gain is greater than the risk. The children adore the attention in general, and even if they often are surprised by what the audience laugh at, the attention in itself is a key element in achieving the feeling of success that’s been elaborated on.

The memory of *communitas*

Victor Turner points out the paradox that “the *experience* of *communitas* becomes the *memory* of *communitas*,” (Turner, 1982, p. 47) which of course this thesis is in itself as well. Having analyzed the memories of last summers events to pieces will no doubt affect the way in which I personally can experience a S&H performance in the future. The ‘innocent first night experience’ is a once in a lifetime experience. Keeping that spontaneity is impossible unless you’re a blue fish named Dory. Turner elaborates: “*communitas* itself in striving to replicate itself historically develops a social structure” (ibid.). Within this concept Turner recognises a second paradox: “the more spontaneously “equal” people become (through the *communitas* – my note), the more distinctively “themselves” they become; the more the *same* they become socially, the less they find themselves to be individually.” (Ibid.) The liminal experience is in it’s longing for itself, no matter how flowy and free by character, it’s own fiend: “Indeed it’s own readiness to convert into normative structure indicates it’s vulnerability to the structural environment.” (Ibid.) Turner further looks at the phenomenon *communitas* in a historical perspective and points out three different kinds, not necessarily belonging in sequential order: *spontaneous*, *ideological*, and *normative*. The spontaneous *communitas* is the non-judging one, the moment in *flow*, when we obtain a “lucid mutual understanding on the existential level” (Turner, 1982, p 48) – a close relative, possibly an identical twin to Fischer-Lichte’s *moments of enchantment*. They are moments, and they will most likely loose their potency in the long run, but while these “fits” last we “place a high value on personal honesty, openness, and lack of pretentions or pretentiousness.” (Ibid.) Spontaneous *communitas* could be described as what the ‘innocent first night audience’ experience. Turner’s second *communitas*; the ideological *communitas*, is when “the retrospective look, “memory”, has already distanced the individual subject from the communal or dyadic experience.” (Ibid.) By applying language and culture we interfere with the experience and within the Csikzentmihalyi / MacAloon terminology this would be called “flow-break”. We stop being and start doing. The S&H audience returning time and time again will necessarily be in this category; it is their deliberate decision to partake and support the children that bring them there based on ideology. They know what to expect, and it is no longer a spontaneous experience. The third category; the normative *communitas* is according to Turner: “a subculture or a group which attempts to foster and maintain

relationships or spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis.” (Turner, 1982, p. 49) S&H, as an organization, represent the normative communitas, it is the beholder in which the other two can be experienced, and as long as there is a mix of newcomers and oldtimers, someone will represent each of the three types of communitas within each event. As an experience though no ideological or normative experience of communitas will ever come close to the spontaneous one. It would be great to be Dory sometimes.



But he IS my son and I AM proud of him –

Milly and Barry collecting souvenirs.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE PRODUCTION OF MEANING

It is with recognition of the methodological specificity of the theatrical research field that I have to throw in the towel and admit that it is not possible in any positivistic way to *prove* any effect as a result of S&H's work. In some ways it would have been great to stand beside every child with a measuring band and, every time they came up from their bow, find that they had stretched a couple of centimetres. But on a second thought - that would no doubt have ruined any enchantment, possibly even turning the event into a competition of who stretched the most! *Enchantment, flow, communitas, social acupuncture, Essential We* and *efficacy* as described and debated in chapters gone can only be experienced on an individual level, or rather experienced in a community through the feedback loop, but assured and described only through introspection and by believing in it. The events do produce meaning though, and the production of meaning lies within in the liminoid experience; it is within the liminoid that people start believing. It is through the break down of 'structure' in Turner's sense of the meaning, that the liminoid takes place, articulated physically through emotions, emotions that produce meaning. The melt down of structure gives room for immediate relations, and through these relations, spontaneously created in the event, the feeling of community emerges and with it the experience of *communitas*.

Let's as a thought experiment transfer the project to Oslo; it might shed a different light to the matter. It is difficult to imagine that a sister project would allow for the same production of meaning in Norway, as it does in London today. But why should it? It is not within in the nature of events to be replicated. All though it would be an incredibly interesting project to create a model tailor made for the children and professionals of Oslo, a couple of possible obstacles spring to mind - partly based on numbers, but mostly on a suspected rigid, hierarchical structure within the Norwegian theatre world. On the numbers side; S&H, with their 400 volunteers, at times struggle to fill all the jobs required; each year running 5 courses with follow-on shows as well as the odd pilot or one off projects on top, usually demanding somewhere between 30 and 40 professionals each time. Does Oslo have that many professionals eligible

for this kind of work; eligible meaning ready, willing and able? Pure demographics indicate a potential problem. The main doubt though lies within the actual ability to produce a similar altruistic meaning. The production of meaning lies within the liminoid experience and the consequential belief lies within the effect, the attitude exemplified by the Playwright mentioned in Chapter Nine could be a prime example of the possible undermining attitude. There seems to be an unfortunate and tangible hierarchy within the business in Norway that just might indicate a stumbling block. There is a definite hierarchical structure in England too, but all actors are at the end of the day in the same boat; without a permanent job and that brings out a unifying openness. In Norway there are people employed on lifetime contracts and it wouldn't be an overstatement to say that the Norwegian system produces a cleft between the freelancers and the permanent staff from the 'institutional' producing theatres. Both sides claim to be the holders of the most 'important' and most 'true' art, both equally sceptical and critical towards each other. Few people cross over and if they do it's usually from the freelance jungle to the contract side, as at the end of the day having a secure job with rights to social benefits is a tempting deal. This means that money and social security is a big motivator. The actors within government-funded institutions would for a project represent a higher 'symbolic capital' (see Chapter Ten) due to their media exposure, and simply because of their link with the institutions. This may be a negative predisposition, but I cannot imagine too many of them would join a project like this, they simply wouldn't see what was in it for them. I am aware that this is a huge generalisation based on the rather unscientific approach of gut feeling, but artistic development is something they know they have through their lifetime, fulltime employment, so why would they want to give up more of their time to that? On several occasions in England I have come across the attitude 'It's pay back time' from actors. This is an attitude of gratitude towards a life and a business that has been generous to them, and that they humbly wish to give something in return to. Somehow I haven't come across that in Norway, but of course that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. No doubt there would be actors in Oslo strongly inclined to join in, but again the numbers would be far less, and with it there comes a risk of loss of artistic quality. Offering money might have been a carrot to attract people, but that would kill the whole principal of volunteering. For the theatre workers, on top of professional development, the production of meaning lies within the worthiness of what they do – worthiness as an emotional value and again -emotions producing meaning. As the old

quote says: “Volunteers don’t get paid because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.” A value guideline like that has to be the heart to which a project of this kind should attract people, otherwise the possibility to produce meaning will be compromised. Setting up a project in Oslo is of course an extremely exciting prospect, but would in other words demand a lot of local adjustment. One way of dealing with the assumed issue of attracting enough people with the right attitude and high enough artistic competence, could be to attempt a cooperation with an institution. Having the symbolic capital of the building itself and the logo of an institution might give the project a perceived higher symbolic value without actually paying the actors - and with it attract actors who otherwise wouldn’t join. All of this is of course said with the knowledge that once upon a time Kate and Sophie started out with little more than an idea and a lot of guts, and eleven years later S&H is a project that produces a lot of meaning for a lot of people.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: CONCLUSION

This thesis is an *emmind*ed body, it is the articulated investigation of the emotions, effects and meanings produced through the experience of being present at, and being part of creating S&H events. S&H as an organization can ultimately be said to have built their system on the power of the autopoietic feedback loop in performance. Although it is contradicting to the nature of the feedback loop, it is tempting to say that they have caught it, tamed it, nourished it, let it grow and today allow it to spin powerfully and effectively each time it comes alive in an event. It's inextricable and highly potent components of aesthetic, social and political nature, as described in foregone chapters, are the sources of its strength; it is through a tight grip on their ideology, constant high demands on artistic delivery and a belief that they can make a difference for the children, that S&H reach their overall aim; to give each child a boost of self esteem. And belief is the main dogma on which they succeed. The effect of experiencing the events is belief; the experience triggers emotions that in turn produce meaning and effect manifested as belief. And in a social acupuncture frame of mind – the most potent releasing trigger point within a S&H event is the children's individual bows; it is the children's reaction to the audience reaction to their bows that symbolically stands out as The Moment of Enchantment. And in urbane, cosmopolitan London today, the symbolic value of this work is as close as we can come to a ritual.

The applied theories have, in the name of my pragmatic approach, been dissected and sometimes taken out of context, I hope not in any way that has been perceived disrespectful. Each theory seemed to find its place showing a different valour of the S&H event, and together created a braid of thought, an intertwined mental pattern of 'such stuff as dreams are made on'. 'Myself as an empiric barometer', as I phrased it in the introduction, methodologically didn't do the trick; the empiric data was collected but wasn't translatable to a measurable entity that I could present on paper. But even though proving effect based on empiric data was impossible, the empiric barometer still had a function: Having had the liminoid experience myself, having felt

the processes of the autopoietic feedback loop on many occasions, both as an actor and as a member of the audience; having had the emotional experience of watching the children, having felt enchanted, having been part of the community allowed an instinctive recognition of theoretical material that resonated with the experience. There has been ‘something of a flow quality about it’ every time theoretical material found its way in – the barometric pressure was raised each time. Even though this barometer is internal and doesn’t have a positivistic chart, it has released my belief. I pointed out in the section *Link to Absent Other – Only for Those There* (see Chapter Eleven) that the belief in efficacy is what makes people return to S&H, and that’s what we can cling to. Of course this completes the picture of immensurability: belief is immeasurable and a believing in an ‘Absent Other’ doesn’t particularly give it any more measurable substance. But by returning to contribute and continue to be part of S&H’s work, by making the children by collectively believing that S&H make a difference – a big difference, it at least gives hope.

Epilogue

I had a Moment of Enchantment in the last few days before handing in this thesis, and I ask for the readers patience in my indulgence; it's not only about children and their growth any more, it's about grown ups and their growth; it's about believing – it's about hope. Hope that belongs to us all, and that comes with the melting down of 'structure' and believing in being part of something bigger than ourselves. It's poetic, it's not academic, but it makes sense if like Erica Fischer-Lichte you believe that emotion produces meaning. It even creates a picture of a personal, internal dialogue - an exchange through conversation, excitement and consolation.

The following was part of the text performed in a production *The Tangible* by the company tg STAN at Black Box Teater in Oslo Friday 16/04/10, and is a quote from the book *A to X: A Story in Letters* by John Berger (2008). It was sent to me via 'chat' on Facebook from one of the performers and that's why the reference doesn't have a page number:

There's such a difference between hope and expectation. At first I believed it was a question of duration, that hope was awaiting something further away. I was wrong. Expectation belongs to the body, whereas hope belongs to the soul. That's the difference. The two converse and excite or console each other but the dream of each one is different. I've learnt something more. The expectation of a body can last as long as any hope. Like mine expecting yours.

(Berger, 2008)

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APPENDIX

The program from *Jumping for Joy – The Uplifting Plays!* is in the appendix not complete due to depersonalizing of the children. The full program can be obtained in a folder on request along with the material listed below:

- Parental consent to use photo material of children
- Consent to use photo material of volunteers
- Copy of email correspondence with Roz Paul 07.01.2010
- Copy of email correspondence with Roz Paul 23.04.2010
- Copy of email correspondence with Ellie Harley 29.09.10
- Copy of Notes on being Class Volunteer for Playmaking One
- Copy of leaflet A Unique Mentoring Project for the Children of Somers Town, London

Interview guide volunteers

CONFIRM NAME AND VOLUNTEER JOB

BACKGROUND

- What's your background?
- Volunteered before?
- IF YES
 - How many times
 - Why have you returned / do you keep on returning
 - Same job or different job?
- IF NO
 - How did you come across S&H?
 - Had you seen performances in advance?
 - What made you decide to volunteer?

THE PREP PROCESS

- Tell me about the preparatory process
- Meeting the children
- Getting the script (Happy with character?)
- Rehearsals
- Tech and Dress
- The group – your colleagues
- Organising yourselves
- Worries on the way?

THE SHOW

- Tell me about the shows.
- Tell me about the audience and the atmosphere
- How is it similar/ different to other shows you've done?
- Tell me about your child author.
- Tell me about taking the bow with your child author.

AESTHETICS

- How would you describe S&Hs aesthetic regime?
- How do your aesthetic choices inform the performance in your opinion?
- Helpful / none helpful to you as an actor?

EFFICACY

- What are the benefits for you as a volunteer?
- Are there any other benefits you think other volunteers might have had on top of that?
- How does it make you feel to work for S&H?
- What are the benefits for the children?
- What do you think has most impact of S&Hs work and how /why?
- What do you think could be done in a different way?
- If S&H offered money for the job. What would change and how?
- What was your favourite moment of it all?

Interview guide parents

CONFIRM NAME AND FAMILY RELATION TO WHICH CHILD AND ASSURE THAT THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS AND WHATEVER COMES TO MIND IS EXACTLY WHAT I WANT TO HEAR.

THE PERFORMANCE

- You attended the Performance of “” tell me about the whole experience.
- Tell me about your daughter /sons play
- Did you like it or not. Why?
- How did you feel when you watched it?
- Were there other members of the family there?
- How did they respond?
- How did the general audience respond?
- How did that make you feel?
- What impression did you get of the audience in general?
- Who were they?
- Have you been to the theatre before?
- If so how was that in comparison?
- Was there anything you felt was difficult about being in the theatre then and or now?

THE COURSE

- How did “ ” enjoy the course?
- Why did you decide to let him/her go?
- Do you feel he/she has gained anything from it?
- Has he/she changed or grown in any particular way?
- Does the impression you had in advance about what he/she was going to be part of correspond with what you have seen / heard about and been part of?
- Tell me about S&H. Who are they and what do they do and why?

FUTURE

- Would you let him/her attend another course?
- Why /why not?
- What is the main value S&H can bring to your child and others?

RELATIONSHIPS

- Has what you’ve seen you son/daughter create through S&H changed the way you look at him/her? If so, in what way?
- What aspect of the course has in you impression been most important for “”
- Why?

Interview guide Sophie Boyack

CONFIRM NAME AND JOB TITLE

BACKGROUND

- Tell me how S&H started?
- Ideology?
- Biggest issues/problems?
- What works best/are you most proud of?
- Relationship with 52 Street Project then and now
- What's different about S&H compared to them?
- Why have you made those choices?

VOLUNTEERS

- Why do volunteers keep on coming back to S&H?
- If you offered them pay – what would change?

AESTHETICS

- How would you describe your aesthetic regime?
- Why have you chosen the scenic elements you have in the regime?
- How do your aesthetic choices inform the performance in your opinion?

SHOW NIGHTS

- Please describe a typical show night.
- The atmosphere.
- The people
- The plays
- The audience (who are they?)
- Why do you think everybody involved are so positive?
- What separates a S&H night to other nights at the theatre?
- What in your impression does watching the performance do with the children?

EFFICACY

- How do you view the effect on the children - benefits?
- Is it possible to measure it and how?
- How do you view the effect on the volunteers - benefits?
- Measurability again?
- Personal effect-benefits?

FUTURE

- What are S&H's greatest strengths / weaknesses?
- If you could change something about S&H, what would it be?
- Future plans?

Interview guide teachers

CONFIRM NAME AND FAMILY RELATION TO SCENE AND HEARD

THE PERFORMANCE

- You attended the Performance of “” tell me about the whole experience.
- Tell me about the plays you saw.
- How many of the playwrights did you know on this occasion?
- How did you feel when you watched it?
- How did the general audience respond?
- How did that make you feel?
- Did you notice how the children responded? How?
- Do you go to the theatre otherwise?
- If so how's a S&H night at the theatre different? (Atmosphere in the room)

GENEREAL RELATIONSHIP

- Tell me how your schools relationship with S&H developed.
- Why do you recommend children to attend?
- What does it do to the children?
- Do you see specific changes in them? If so what?
- What can S&H offer that the school can't?
- Any special stories come to mind?

THE COURSE

- How did “” enjoy the course?
- Why did you decide to suggest the children you did?
- Do you feel they've gained anything from it?
- Have they changed or grown in any particular way?

RELATIONSHIPS

- Has what you've seen you son/daughter create through S&H changed the way you look at the children? If so, in what way?
- If you take the whole process into consideration, what aspect of it do you think is the most important for the children? (course, shows, adult attention....)
- Why?

Audience questionnaire

Please fill in the form and hand in by the door. This is an anonymous questionnaire which is part of a study conducted by Siri Ingul for her MA degree at the Oslo University. Please do NOT write your name on it.

In what capacity are you here today? (Please tick one box)

Family / friend of child	Family / friend of volunteer	General Audience
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you been to a Scene and Heard performance before?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so, how many times and why do you come back?

Would you like to come back another time?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why / why not?

PLEASE TURN PAGE

Would you consider volunteering for Scene and Heard?

Yes	No

Why / why not?

Please describe how you experienced tonight's performance with a few key words.

What for you was the most memorable moment tonight and why?

If you've been to the theatre elsewhere - what makes a night at Scene and Heard different to your previous experience in the theatre?

Information to possible informants

LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE HAPPY TO TALK TO ME ABOUT SCENE AND HEARD

Who am I?

My name is Siri Ingul and I have been a classroom assistant and a dramaturge helping the children during this Playmaking One course with Scene and Heard. I have also previously been involved with Scene and Heard as an actress. I am at the moment doing a degree in Theatre Studies at the University of Oslo and as part of my degree I'm writing about Scene and Heard in general and more specifically about this course and the performances of *Jumping For Joy The Uplifting Plays!*

Why?

I am trying to find out how the 'Scene and Heard system' works and how it affects all the people involved. I am hoping to make more people aware of the work that Scene and Heard are doing and possibly to assist a similar project to benefit children in Oslo.

How?

In order to do so I am looking for some people who are willing to talk to me about how they experienced the evenings in the theatre.

Who am I looking for?

I am looking to talk to children, parents, teachers, volunteers, and Scene and Heard staff.

What will I ask about?

If you do agree to talk to me I would ask you to describe what you experienced in the theatre, how it made you feel and how it made you think about the work and the people you know that have been involved.

When, where and how?

The conversation would be very informal and take place at a time and place that is convenient for you and would last approximately half an hour, depending a bit on your answers. The interview would be recorded onto a computer and later transcribed. You can at any time stop the interview if you change your mind and don't want to be part of the project any more.

If you prefer you can choose to be anonymous so that your name would never be mentioned in the report, this is completely up to you.

PATRONS:
Damian Lewis
Emily Watson
Samuel West



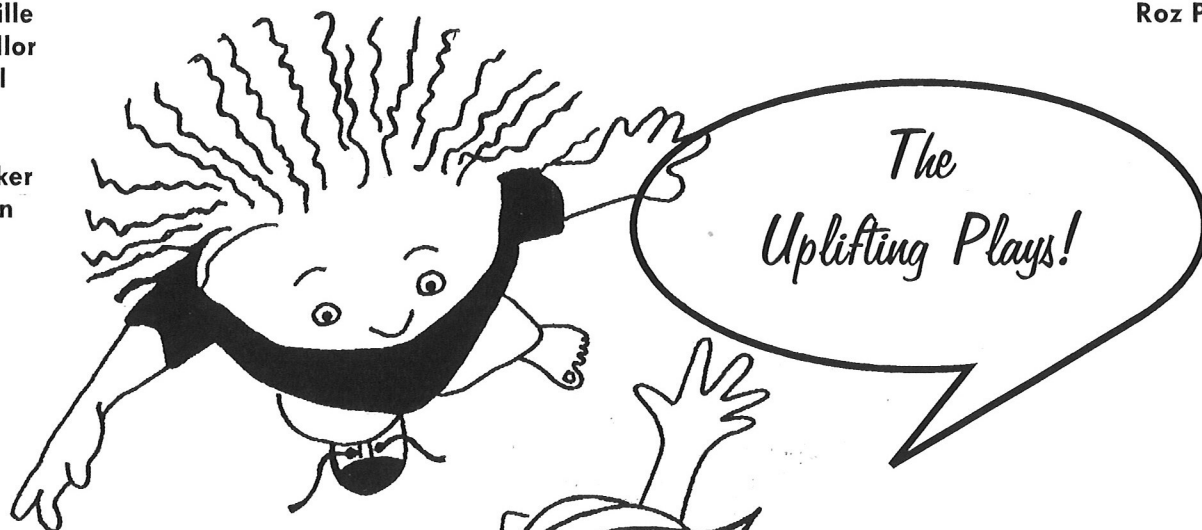
SCENE & HEARD

presents

**FOUNDER
DIRECTORS:**
Sophie Boyack
Kate Coleman

**HONORARY
PATRONS:**
Hugh Bonneville
Anna Chancellor
Jennie Darnell
Bill Nighy
Cathy Tyson
Zoë Wanamaker
Richard Wilson

**ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR:**
Roz Paul



JUMPING FOR JOY

The Uplifting Plays!

Thursday 2nd July 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

Friday 3rd July 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

Saturday 4th July 2009 @ 7:30 p.m.

Sunday 5th July 2009 @ 3:00 p.m.

THEATRO TECHNIS, 26 CROWDALE ROAD, LONDON NW1

www.sceneandheard.org Registered Charity No. 1077836



SCENE & HEARD

1999-2009 HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY

In November 1998 Scene & Heard was a nameless germ of an idea being discussed by two friends over dinner. Only three months later it had become a reality with the first *Playmaking One* class taking place in Somers Town on the 3rd February 1999. That course culminated in the production '*In At The Deep End - The Very First Plays!*'

Since then Scene & Heard has run over 30 courses and produced over 250 original plays. Our success over the last ten years is thanks to our volunteers - who have embraced the concept of Scene & Heard; to our funders - who value its impact on the children; to the families and schools who have welcomed us into the children's lives and their community; to the audiences who come with open hearts to take part in each celebration of the imagination. And of course the children who come to Scene & Heard, take a bow and come up that little bit taller.

Scene & Heard's survival has always been very hard to mouth and we believe that the most fitting way for us to mark our tenth anniversary is to secure it's future. This is why we are urging everyone who feels that they can to buy Scene & Heard a birthday present! £2.00 a month....a small amount that will make a

BIG difference!

Sign up to our Eyes & Ears Giving Scheme* and be part of the magic of Scene & Heard!

THANK YOU!

*please find form at the Box Office.

THE PLAYMAKING ONE COURSE

All the plays you will see performed today have been written by children aged 9-11 who have taken part in **Scene & Heard's** *Playmaking One* course. This is the first time these children have worked with us and over the last term they have attended eight classes and an intensive writing weekend, working in partnership throughout with theatre professionals. The resulting plays were then handed to a director and two professional actors all of whom have spent the last three weeks rehearsing. The result is *Jumping For Joy - The Uplifting Plays!*

PRODUCTION TEAM

Artistic Director: Roz Paul

Production Designer: Lizzie Bardwell

Costume Makers: Flo Tasker, Melissa Stephens

Lighting Design & Operator: Aaron Dootson

Sound Design: Simon Grover

Props: Giles Taylor, Kate Coleman, Emma Pallant, Catherine Kanter,

Production Assistants: Dan Cloake, Lilit Batikian

Scene & Heard Administrators: Simma Gershenson & Jasmine Rowe

Front of House: Louisa Gummer, Mufrida Hayes, Pilar Orti, Emma Pallant

PLAYMAKING ONE CLASS VOLUNTEERS

Liz Crowther, Patricia Gannon, Siri Ingul, Sarah Lawn, Hannah Mackay,

Michael Palmer, Gordon Peaston, Gordon Ridout, Suzanne Robertson,

Beatrice Rose, Simon Scardifield, Shelley Silas, Kai Simmons

SCENE & HEARD'S FOUNDER-DIRECTORS

Sophie Boyack & Kate Coleman

SCENE & HEARD'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Ros Colman, Nick Gray, Romina Harris, Max Hill QC (Chair),

Michelle Nelson, George Ormond, Paul Perkins, Geoff Smout,

John Twigg & Will Wharfe

AND WITH MANY THANKS TO...

Edith Neville Primary School and St. Aloysius Junior School, Sally

Warren at Plot 10 After School Club, Lizzie Lewenden, Sina at Godwin &

Crowndale, Oriental Fashions at Chinatown Market

MAIL OUTS:

Julia Tarnoky, David Cottis, Jex Worsnip, Titania Krimpas, Griff

Mellhuish, Kai Simmons, Sophia Row, Alice Barclay, Amanda Maud, Rachel

Sloane & Patrick Driver

ALL CHANGE AT SCENE & HEARD

As most of you know Scene & Heard is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. Having reached this landmark Kate Coleman, co-founder director, has decided that it is time for her to move on and embark on a new chapter. Her commitment and determination to make the organisation the success it has become has been quite awe inspiring. She will be greatly missed by everyone, but will remain an ardent supporter and audience member. We are also sad to be losing Simma Gershenson who has been our administrator for the last 2 ½ years having originally volunteered for us as a production manager on our first show in 1999.



However, fear not! There is an all new line up at the helm comprising both old and new. Sophie Boyack will become Director of the company with Roz Paul in post as Artistic Director.



They are delighted to welcome newcomer, Jasmine Rowe who started work as Scene & Heard's full time administrator at the beginning of June. She joins us from the Arcola Theatre and has a strong arts administration background; we are sure that she will be an asset to the team.



SCENE & HEARD'S WORK THIS TERM IS FUNDED BY:

The Henry Smith Charity, The Stansfield Trust,
The Peter De Haan Charitable Trust &
BBC Children in Need.
and by our 2009 Anniversary Sponsors:
Mr & Mrs Roger Emerson and One Essex Court.

WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR THEIR SUPPORT

Want to become a Scene & Heard Volunteer?

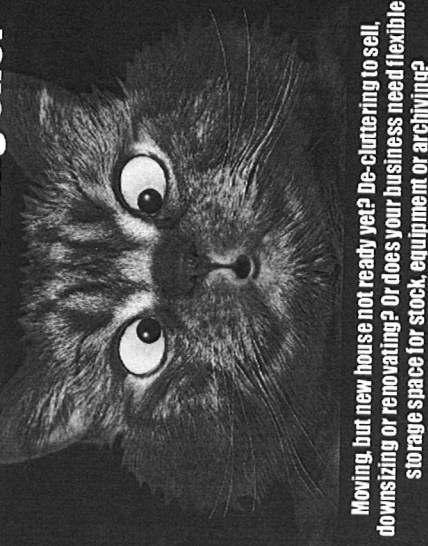


Scene & Heard is entirely reliant on the generosity of the theatre professionals who volunteer their services. We are always keen to hear from actors, writers, directors, musicians and technicians and regularly hold open evenings to introduce interested people to our work. If you would like to find out more, please complete one of the slips which are at the Box Office and leave it in a bucket at the end of the performance. Or email us or visit our website:

mail@sceneandheard.org **www.sceneandheard.org**

Our next open evening will be held Wednesday, 23rd September, 6:30 p.m. at Teatro Technis. If you would like to attend please contact Jasmine on 0845 009 0775 or mail@sceneandheard.org

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SCENE & HEARD

A CELEBRATION OF THE IMAGINATION

Ten Years of Scene & Heard

1999 - 2009

Sunday 31st May 2009

6.00 p.m.

THE SHAW THEATRE

100-110 Euston Road, London NW1 2AJ.

ACT ONE

INTRODUCTION

Sophie Boyack & Kate Coleman
Scene & Heard's Founder Directors

WHAT IS SCENE & HEARD?

Aliesha Pedro, Anastasia Browne, Michael Yeboah,
Dayne Henry, Nazim Uddin, Shelleen Phelan.

IMAGES OF SCENE & HEARD FROM THE LAST 10 YEARS

MY SCENE & HEARD

Neil Edmond

CHARACTER PROFILES

Nick Rowe, Heather Coombs, Ben Moor,
Shannon Phelan, Shayna Russell & Bethany Plews.

"THE TOILET SONG"

from 'Glittery Disco Day' by Cigden Guvec (2000)

Revisited by Oliver Senton as Tabby Man &
Sophie Russell as Gwinsey Glitter the nail varnish

CHARACTER CHAOS

Ghiv Chahidi & Jenni Maitland

SONG: "COME ON DOWN TO SOMERS TOWN"

The Scene & Heard Anniversary Anthem

Lyrics: Simon Grover Music: Rebecca Thorn & Ronnie Parris

Introduced by Roz Paul, Scene & Heard's Artistic Director

There follows a 20 minute interval

A CELEBRATION OF THE IMAGINATION

The Evening Ahead...

When planning Scene & Heard's Tenth Anniversary Celebration we knew that as well as looking back we also wanted to look to the future. So tonight the first act gives us a chance to share with you highlights from the last ten years and the second act will introduce you to a whole new Scene & Heard project!

Tonight, instead of ten individual short plays we present one BIG play, with a scene each written by the playwrights, who represent all ten years of Scene & Heard's history and appropriately are aged 10-20 years old.

During the Celebration Writing Weekend the young playwrights all created ONE new character for themselves to use and then pass on to the next playwright. We like to think of it as tag-team play-writing!

We start the play with a character first created by Kaylee Pedro in 1999. Queen Clare was written by Kaylee on the first Playmaking One Course in Spring 1999, when she was aged 10. We are delighted that actress Kate Terence is reprising the role that she made her own in Scene & Heard's 1999 production "In at the Deep End"!

Thank you so much for joining us - ENJOY!

10 YEARS OF SCENE & HEARD SONGS

Your pre-show and interval music features the backing tracks from Scene & Heard shows throughout the last ten years. The composers who have volunteered their time & talents to Scene & Heard over the last decade are:

Alice Barclay, Neil Carter, Gervase Cooke, Carlton Edwards, Chris Hoban, Michael Jarvis, Lizzie Lewenden, Sally Mais, Andrew Mallen, Simon McCorry, Ben O'Sullivan, Ronnie Paris, Richard Pitt, Richard Thomas, Rebecca Thorn, David Schweitzer & Jane Watkins.

ACT TWO

No Worries by Kaylee Pedro, aged 20
Dramaturg: Becca Manley

The Metallic by Wamiq Matin, aged 11
Dramaturg: Neil Edmond

The Fear Connection by Deniz Hatipoglu, aged 17
Dramaturg: Emma Cleasby

A Julius Caesar Wannabe by Andre Sloane, aged 13
Dramaturg: Kai Simmons

The River Flows by Mark Pedro, aged 18
Dramaturg: Martin Heaney

When Thinking of Others, Remember Yourself
by Anna Marie Cabanlig, aged 12
Dramaturg: Kathrine Smith

The Rusty Ring and the Dusty Chair
by Charlie Robinson, aged 16
Dramaturg: David Cottis

Funfair Stories by Lauren Francis, aged 13
Dramaturg: Catherine Kanter

P.B. & J Rocks! by Ramône Dale-Cruikshank, aged 15
Dramaturg: Ben Moor

Super Sensational Sloppy Sloop
by Khadijah Rahman, aged 12
Dramaturg: Bradley Cole

ACT TWO

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Queen Clare – a queen**Kate Terence**
Jermaine Jolomona Junior – a Jamaican pigeon.....**Don Gilet**
Ironosteel – red hot metal.....**Sarah Lawn**
Kevin Bishop – a koala bear.....**Oliver Senton**
Lucky – A sea lion.....**John Lightbody**
Penny Pundentious – a ballpoint pen.....**Susie Trayling**
Rocky – a rocking chair.....**Simon Scardifield**
Sovvy – a rusty sovereign ring.....**Matt Steer**
Lucinda – a funfair.....**Emma Swinn**
Respeses – a centaur.....**Giles Taylor**
Sloppy Sloop – an overweight piece of spaghetti.....**Sophie Duval**

Director: Sophie Boyack

Writing Weekend: Kate Coleman

Scene & Heard Technician: Aaron Dootson

Stage Manager: Susie Foster

Sound Design: Roz Paul & Simon Grover

Costume & Props: Julia Bunce & Kate Coleman

Composers: Rebecca Thorn & Ronnie Paris

**Please join us after the show for a complimentary glass of bubbly
(or juice!) The bar will remain open.**

"COME ON DOWN TO SOMERS TOWN"

The Scene & Heard Anniversary Anthem

Lyrics: Simon Grover Music: Rebecca Thorn & Ronnie Parris

CHORUS

Come on down to Somers Town
Come and find what we have found
Clap and cheer, here and now
I'll appear and take a bow
Have you seen? Have you heard?
I have written every word
Come and listen come and see
Every word is just by me

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

As part of archiving the last ten years we have set out to interview ALL the children who have ever taken part in Scene & Heard. It has been fantastic to catch up with their lives and reminisce about their time at Scene & Heard and the difference it made to them. All the information will be collated in a project this Autumn and be used as part of our ongoing evaluation of Scene & Heard's long-term impact on the children involved.

Thank you so much to the interviewers:

**Jason Cheater, Bradley Cole, Martin Heaney,
Sabina Netherclift, Kali Peacock,
Martin Ritchie, Nick Rowe,
Simon Scardifield, Lucy Scott.**



SCENE & HEARD

FOR SCENE & HEARD'S CELEBRATION OF THE IMAGINATION

Produced by Sophie Boyack, Kate Coleman & Roz Paul
Administrator & Box Office: Simma Gershenson
Technical Advisor : Kevin Woods
Front of House: Louisa Gummer
Archivist & Front of House Display: José Prego
(Placement student from Birkbeck, University of London:
MA in Arts Policy & Management)
Filming : Gaby Szabo & Ben Tunningly
Mailout: David Cottis, Titania Krimpas, Griff Melhuish,
Sophia Roe, Kai Simmons & Julia Tarnoky

SCENE & HEARD SINGERS:

Alice Barclay, Anastasia Brown, Anna Marie Cabanlig, Rachel Flint, Georgia Foster, Louisa Gummer, Libby Habib, Shadman Habib, Dayne Henry, Stefanick Iviara, Ballu Koroma, Becca Manley, Aoife Monks, Ben Moor, Ross Mullan, Michael Palmer, Aliesha Pedro, Kaylee Pedro, Shannon Phelan, Shelleen Phelan, Bethany Plews, Suzanne Robertson, Gaby Row Bryan, Nick Rowe, Shayna Russell, Richmond Tabajonda, Nazim Uddin,
Michael Yeboah, Edward Yeboah.

THANK YOU TO...

Martin Ritchie, Paul D. Smith, the staff at The Shaw Theatre, Jenni Archibald at Jackson's Lane, Duncan at Candid Arts, Sally Warren at Plot 10 After School Club, Sina at Godwin & Crowndale Community Hall, Ruth at St. Pancras Community Hall, Brett Matthews, David Waller, Carolyn Weinstein at the BBC, John Jackson Almond

FOR THE SHAW

Technical Manager: Mark Warren
Front of House Manager: Mark Saunders
Administration Manager: Louise Ashcroft

SCENE & HEARD'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Ros Colman, Nick Gray, Romina Harris, Max Hill QC (Chair), Michelle Nelson, George Ormond, Paul Perkins, Geoff Smout, John Twigg & Will Wharfe.



LOTTERY FUNDED



SCENE & HEARD

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mail@sceneandheard.org
www.sceneandheard.org

Registered Charity No. 1077836

Should an accident happen, however minor, Roz must be informed at once and will take the necessary action. It is particularly important to adhere to this rule should a child be involved in an accident. Roz is the Scene & Heard's registered and trained first aider.

Any questions? Just call us!

Office number (Simma):

Scene & Heard Mobile (Roz):

Scene & Heard

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

FOR VOLUNTEERS

The purpose of having a code of behaviour is to make clear to all volunteers what is expected of them whilst volunteering for Scene & Heard and in turn what they can expect from the other volunteers that they work with. The points below have been drafted following consultation with existing volunteers:

1. Please show **respect for your fellow volunteers** during your time with Scene & Heard. Everybody is giving up their time to work for Scene & Heard and it is helpful if everyone can be as flexible as possible with each other.
2. Please ensure that you **attend** classes, rehearsals and performances as agreed **promptly**. If you are unable to attend at a previously agreed time, please notify Scene & Heard as soon as possible.
3. Please try wherever possible to **give positive feedback to the children** regarding their work and behaviour. Scene & Heard is a self-esteem boosting project first and foremost and the children simply cannot receive too much positive feedback.
4. **It is unacceptable to swear in front of the children** and it is also **unacceptable to be rude or disrespectful to Scene & Heard workers or volunteers** in front of the children. It is extremely important that we set a perfect model in terms of behaviour regardless of personal feelings.
5. Please **do not give any gifts to any of the children**. More than anything else this is to ensure an equal experience for all children at Scene & Heard.
6. Please **do not secure a child's address, phone number or email address** in order to maintain a relationship with them outside of Scene & Heard. This includes internet contact via **social networking sites** e.g. Facebook. Please do not accept any requests by Scene & Heard children to be friends on these sites. Should a request be made please let Scene & Heard know as soon as possible. While this is clearly a child protection issue it is also about protecting our volunteers from any possible misinterpretation of conduct.

7. It is **unacceptable to be under the influence of drink or drugs** whilst at Scene & Heard or to have any drugs on your person.
8. If you feel you have a **legitimate grievance** with another volunteer, please approach the Artistic Director Rosalind Paul to discuss your grievance.
9. If you have a grievance with the Artistic Director please contact Sophie Boyack, on